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THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE



J. R. ABBARBANELL









You come a step nearer, and I'll show you how I shoot."

THE
Heart of the People

A PICTURE OF LIFE AS IT IS TO-DAY

BY

J. R. ABARBANELL

*Author of "The Wife of Monte Cristo"
"The Rector's Secret," "Flirtation," etc.*



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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF
Henry George
WHO TRIED TO SHOW THE WAY OUT

The heart of the people beats fondly and true,
The heart of the people, which means me and you ;
Oh, let not that heart be broken in twain,
Oh, give it just cause to be joyful again.

The heart of the people, oh, fill it with love,
The love that's the essence of God up above ;
Then with joy it will throb, your heart and mine,
With joy that's eternal, celestial, divine.

AGNES MERRIHEW.

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The Heart of the People

CHAPTER I

THE VICTIM

PRISONER at the bar, what have you to say why sentence of death should not be imposed on you?"

It was the afternoon of a sunshiny day in autumn not so many years ago, when these solemn words were addressed by the Recorder in the Court of General Sessions of the City of New York to the prisoner, who had just been convicted of murder in the first degree.

Without, there was the busy hum of the streets; men and women went about their daily vocations, stopping occasionally to glance up at the new Criminal Courts Building, just then recently opened, and

to exchange comments about this very murder case, which was the sensation of the hour. Newsboys were darting hither and thither, crying the latest "Extras," which already spread the news in glaring letters printed in blood-red ink of "Found Guilty!" And above all, the bright sun shone, and the fresh autumn breeze swept through the streets, bringing with it the scent of the salt sea waves from the harbor and the perfume of late-blooming flowers from the fields of Long Island. In the roadway the sparrows chirped and twittered; disturbed by passing car or wagon, they rose in a swarm and, happy in their own free, joyous life, flocked to the windows and eaves of the stately building in which a man was being condemned to death.

In the crowded court a tense stillness reigned, instead of the noise and confusion which had come from the corner where a group of hard-visaged men sat. When the jury came in, these men, whose attire and hardened, sinewy hands proclaimed them workers in some foundry, cast significant glances at each other, muttering: "It's all up with Jack." "I told you so." "If it had been the young boss now that was a-bein' tried," etc., etc.

"Order in the court!" shouted the crier, and the Recorder rapped heavily on his desk with his gavel. This brought the mutterings to an end, and the workmen contented themselves with gazing at the prisoner and the group of women whom morbid curiosity had attracted to this sad, tragic scene. Among them, a young girl, shabbily attired, was trying to hide her pale, drawn face in an old shawl. Occasionally she peered out between its folds at the accused with the eyes of one suffering, who beholds a newer, more terrible sorrow.

The rest of the great throng of spectators rustled into silence, as they ordinarily do when the curtain rises at a theater, while the reporters at the press-table sharpened their pencils and got ready to make history of the occurrence.

And thus the drama had proceeded with only a single gasping, half-suppressed interruption of "Oh, my God!" from the young, shabbily dressed girl when the foreman of the jury uttered the ominous word "Guilty." And now, after a hurried colloquy with his attorneys, who seemed to be dissuading him, the prisoner, who had been standing facing the judge, prepared to answer the momentous ques-

tion why he should not be placed in the electric chair at Sing Sing.

His lawyers shrugged their shoulders at his determination. They had been assigned to his defense by the court, and, having in a perfunctory sort of way done their duty by him, sat down and left him standing alone to meet his fate.

Jack McQuillan, the prisoner, as he stood there facing the Recorder, was a young giant of about twenty-one years, with arms and limbs which even in the ordinary work-day garb he wore betokened the extraordinary muscular development of one accustomed to hard physical labor all his life. The District Attorney during the trial had referred to him as "the embodiment of brute strength." He was indeed a modern Samson; it was the power of his muscular arms and brawny hands that had put him in the shadow of the electric chair.

His round, clean-shaven face was crowned with reddish-brown hair and otherwise beautified by eyes of Irish blue; but his countenance bore out the impression of strength rather than the intelligence which even a common school education gives.

That face was working now with emotions that

made his powerful chest heave like a pair of bellows; emotions which by the advice of his counsel had been pent-up during the trial, but which were now struggling to be released, while his blue eyes sought the stern, impassive face of his judge with a look in them of puzzled wonderment and some indignation, but no fear.

"Your Honor," he began in a voice whose rugged accent made it sound like the low growl of a wild animal, "my lawyers wanted me to keep my mouth shut, sayin' it warn't no use nohow, as ther jury had brought in ther verdict' an' seein' Your Honor couldn't do no less than send me ter ther 'lectric chair. Well, if it comes to that, I s'pose I can meet me fate like a man, for Jack McQuillan's never yet flinched in his life."

There was a slight ripple of applause in the court-room at this point, which was instantly checked by the court crier. Then the prisoner continued:

"However, what I was goin' ter tell yer, if yer'll let me have me say, Your Honor, is that I never meant ter kill ther dago. I only giv' him a grip 'round ther neck, thinkin' ter quiet him like, but ther man died in me hands like he was a sick kitten,

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which if he were sickly-like I didn't know it. Your Honor, an' seein' as how my hands has more strength than I giv' 'em credit for, an'——"

"I do not care to listen to all this," interrupted the Recorder in cold, measured tones. "All that was fully gone into at the trial, and your counsel have done all they could for you. The fact of the killing being established and conceded by you, criminal intent does not enter into this case. At the time of the commission of the murder you were engaged in an unlawful act. You and your fellow-workmen were on a strike against the establishment where you and they had been employed. You tried by force and violence to prevent the Italian from entering the works to procure the situation which you had voluntarily quitted. It was an unlawful act for you to do this, and the moment you laid violent hands on the deceased you committed a crime, which became murder in the first degree in this case. Have you anything else to say?"

"I've got nothin' ter say except that I didn't mean ter kill ther dago," rather gloomily and despondently replied the prisoner.

"Very well," said the Recorder. "Then I will listen to your counsel."

The defendant's attorneys, as in duty bound, made various motions in arrest of judgment, all of which were denied on the spot, as they knew they would be.

After that the silence in the courtroom became profound and painful. The young girl in the shabby attire arose from the bench on which she had been sitting and convulsively pressed her hands against her bosom to stifle the cries that were forcing themselves to her lips. The crucial moment had arrived.

"Prisoner at the bar," began the Recorder in tones whose cold impassivity sent an icy chill through the hearts of all who heard him, "you have had an eminently fair and impartial trial. Your counsel, though assigned to your defense by this court, labored as arduously and as conscientiously in your behalf as if they had been retained with the promise of a large fee. After hearing all the evidence, and after due deliberation, the jury found you guilty, as charged in the indictment. I wish to take this opportunity of publicly thanking the jury for the promptness with which they found the verdict. They

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were out less than half an hour, which shows that they must have been practically unanimous in their judgment. In so acting they have performed a meritorious public service in these times of labor riots, which eventually lead to bloodshed and murder, as it has done in this case."

At this point the Recorder paused in his exhortation to bow to the jurymen, who had remained seated in the jury-box, eager to witness the concluding act in the drama in which they had been part performers. The twelve "peers of the realm" returned His Honor's bow, each with a self-satisfied smirk on his smug visage.

The group of workingmen already alluded to watched this by-play with sullen countenances.

"Jack never stood no show with that sort of jury," muttered one of the men.

"Yer right, Bill," assented another. "It's ther under dog allus gets it in ther neck."

The Recorder must have heard these remarks, for he turned his keen eyes toward the speakers and, having awed the group of toilers into silence with a glance, continued in a sharper voice than he had heretofore used:

"This court, as long as I am Recorder, will uphold the majesty of the law, and will sternly set its face against all violators of the public peace. Let all who are therein concerned take note of and warning from the fate to which the prisoner at the bar has virtually, by his own misguided acts, condemned himself. The law concedes the right of any man or any set of men to decline to work for an individual or a corporation. They may do so if they feel aggrieved for any cause, or for no cause at all. But their liberty of action extends no further as far as their relations to their former employer are concerned. Their voluntary act makes the positions they have left vacant, and any person has the lawful right to apply to the employer to fill these places. For a striker to prevent such a person from exercising this right is to put himself out of the pale of the protection of the law—he becomes an outlaw. Of what follows, then, you are witnesses. These are elementary and well understood principles of the law, but I have stated them for the benefit of some persons in this courtroom who may, perhaps, be deemed ignorant of them."

Having delivered this shot at the group of men for

whom it was intended, the Recorder again turned to the prisoner, who all this while was standing in a dejected attitude, with his eyes fixed on the floor, ready to receive his sentence.

"John McQuillan," solemnly said the judge, "you have been found guilty of murder in the first degree. The penalty for that crime is fixed by statute, and nothing remains for me to do but to pronounce it."

He paused for a moment and cleared his throat. The prisoner raised his eyes and gazed fixedly at him. His face was pale, but the only agitation he showed was the convulsive gripping with his right hand of the burnished copper railing against which he stood.

"The sentence of this court is," continued the Recorder, "that you be taken hence and kept in close confinement until the first week of next November, when, on a day to be fixed, you be placed in the electric chair at the prison in Sing Sing and an electric current be discharged into your body until you are dead."

The condemned man bowed his head as a token that he had heard his sentence.

"The prisoner will be taken to the Tombs," or-

dered the judge, "thence to be conveyed to Sing Sing. This court stands adjourned."

Instantly a great bustle and confusion arose. The spectators rushed out into the aisles, the workingmen crowded forward for a last greeting to their comrade. The sheriff motioned to two policemen, who, stepping up, ranged themselves on each side of the prisoner. The march back to the cell from which he had been taken to the courthouse was begun.

As the condemned man stepped into the aisle, the shabbily dressed girl pressed forward in the throng, and rushed toward him with outstretched arms.

"Oh, Jack! Jack!" she cried, then fell at his feet in a swoon.

"Who is that woman?" asked the Recorder, pausing as he was about to leave the bench.

"It's only me sister Maggie, Your Honor," replied the prisoner, as he stood gazing sadly down at her.

A middle-aged man in priestly garb pushed his way forward, and, sinking on one knee beside the fainting girl, raised her head in his arms.

"'Tis the Soggarth Aroon," ran a murmur through

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the courtroom. Those who had already covered their heads removed their hats, and all stood with heads bowed as if in prayer.

CHAPTER II

THE CAREER OF A SELF-MADE MAN

THE Armytage Printing Press Works, at which the strike which led to such deplorable results had occurred, were situated in the city of New York, and were probably the largest in the country, with their immense buildings and foundries, under the roofs of which two thousand men and boys toiled nine hours each working day for their own wages and the profit of their employer.

As wages went, the employees were fairly well paid. The "shop," as it was familiarly called by the men, was a "Union" establishment. The "Union" regulated the prices paid to labor, the hours of work, the question of apprentices, and all the other snags that in other factories impede the ship of industry, if they do not convert it into a wreck. In fact, it was an establishment to which the Labor Unions pointed

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with pride as to what could be accomplished under the system of Trade Unionism; while its founder, James Armytage, during his lifetime, proudly boasted of the fact that his men had never gone on a strike. That the works from a very humble beginning had kept on increasing until they represented several millions of dollars in capital, and that James Armytage, who had landed on these shores from England without a dollar in his pocket, died worth about four millions, while his employees, some of whom had been with him from the day he constructed his first press, in spite of their "Union" wages, had never been able to save more than a pittance at the best from their weekly pay—this was a matter that neither the employer nor the Trades Union seemed ever to have considered.

James Armytage had learned his trade of press builder in his native land, and although on landing on these shores his pockets were empty, still he had a trade which fifty years ago was practically in its infancy in this country. After working five years for others, he had saved enough from his wages to begin in a small way to build presses on his own account. He was able to save because he was then a strapping



young fellow of twenty, without kith or kin depending on him for support and naturally of a thrifty, not to say miserly, disposition. The condition of the country in that far-off time, too, was so far different from what it is to-day that it required little or no capital for the man otherwise qualified to establish himself in business. He had also perfected and patented some valuable improvements which soon gave his presses a preference over others.

Five years later Mr. Armytage was obliged to increase his establishment by the addition of a new building which he erected next to the little edifice in which he had begun operations, and to which he was accustomed to point with pride as "the cradle of my institution, sir," until it was ultimately torn down with other buildings to make room for the huge series of buildings which constituted the present works.

Thus the Armytage Printing Press Works had its origin and thus the "Institution," as Mr. Armytage delighted to call it, grew to its present greatness. Nor did he neglect what, from his point of view, he considered his "duty" to those whom he regarded as dependent on him for their daily bread and butter.

As his wealth increased he established a technological school where his apprentices could perfect themselves in the mechanical details of his business; one room was devoted to a reference library for books and papers pertaining to his own and affiliated trades for the use of his men, and another was converted into a bathroom with a fine plunge bath, so that when almost overcome from the heat in the foundry, the men could take a refreshing and reviving plunge in the cold water and thus be able to continue work for their mutual benefit. Mr. Armytage also declared that no man in his employ should lose his wages through absence from work on account of sickness of himself or in his family—a promise which he scrupulously kept.

Besides this he was a liberal, even generous, contributor to many public charities, a patron of libraries, hospitals, and institutions of fine arts—so much so that when he died it was in an odor, if not of sanctity, of at least philanthropy, and the papers generally chronicled his decease as that of a foremost citizen and a public benefactor.

It was not until he was nearly forty years of age and a millionaire that James Armytage felt that he

could afford the luxury of domestic ties. In person he was undersized and portly; his face was inclined to be round and beefy; his head was partly covered with a sparse fringe of tow-colored hair; under his bushy eyebrows peered forth a pair of watery, light-blue eyes. His short, thick-set legs were inclined to be bowed—"bandy-legged," some of his own irreverent apprentices called it—while his large, ungainly hands bore the impress all his lifetime of those earlier days when he himself worked at the forge.

While a master of his trade he often lamented his lack of an education and did not trust himself to compose his own business letters. But in this, as in other respects, he laid it down as a maxim that you could hire brains as well as muscles, and he had the shrewdness to employ the best of private secretaries as well as the cleverest of heads of departments and general managers. In spite of every effort he made to correct himself of the habit, he would occasionally lapse into his native Cockney dialect, dropping his "h's" and adding superfluous ones in a way that would startle a casual acquaintance who would meet and converse with him in the foyer of the Metropolitan Opera House where he had a private box,

Notwithstanding these little deficiencies of body and mind, which after all did not detract from the general uprightness of his character, James Armytage, when he determined to enter the bonds of wedlock, found no difficulty in forming an alliance with a young lady—an orphan of moderate means—who by virtue of her descent from a revolutionary ancestor moved in what was then the best circles of society. If not a marriage of love it was one of mutual respect. Mr. Armytage gained admittance to that charmed circle which has since been designated as “the four hundred,” while his bride was enabled, through her husband’s fortune, to be a leader in the “swell set” instead of a mere follower.

During their short married life, which lasted only five years, they were as happy in each other as almost any other married couple, and when, after giving birth to a boy, Mrs. Armytage died a few weeks after the birth of her second child, a girl, Mr. Armytage sincerely mourned her loss, showed the fidelity of his affection by never marrying again, and devoted the rest of his life to the rearing of his children in a way to make them fit to occupy the high station

in life to which their mother's gentle breeding and their father's great wealth entitled them.

Nothing was too good for Harold and Gladys, as the brother and sister were respectively named. If ever children were born with golden spoons in their mouths, they were such children. Every advantage that wealth could procure was theirs from the time they were babes in arms, through their school and college life, until the day when their father, who loved them as the apple of his eye, breathed his last.

At the time of his father's death, three years before the opening of this story, Harold Armytage had just reached his majority and was as fine a specimen of young American manhood as could be seen anywhere in this country. From his English father he had inherited his sturdy physique, refined by the strain of pure Knickerbocker blood which ran in the veins of his mother, who was a DePeyster. If to his father he owed his stalwart frame, his fair, florid complexion, laughing blue eyes and curly golden hair, to his mother he was indebted for the fact that he was a much taller man than his father had been, and that he was inclined to the poetical and fanciful. At Yale, while not much behind the best of his class-

mates in his studies or on the athletic teams, he secretly wrote poems, constructed works of fiction, elaborated the plot of a play, and dabbled with the brush of the painter and the chisel of the sculptor.

Naturally all this was done purely for the love of doing it, and while his chums at college were enthusiastic admirers of his talents and made him their class poet, he himself considered all he did in the light of an amateur nor deemed it possible that the time could ever come when he would use his gifts as a means of earning a livelihood. Nor why indeed should he? Life to him was one long vista of a path strewn with the roses of ease in the golden garden of plenty. His every wish was anticipated by an indulgent father, who, with the English definition of the term gentleman in his mind, was conscious that he himself was not one, and considered it the very highest of his achievements to "make a gentleman," as he phrased it, of his son and heir.

Had young Harold any tendencies to dissipation or viciousness his father would have succeeded in thoroughly spoiling him. As it was, he was saved from the rocks that shipwreck the lives and careers of so many of our millionaires' sons by an innate



consciousness of rectitude and a feeling of self-respect which made him shrink from following the escapades of some of the more reckless of his fellow-students, and yet did not make a pharisaical, conceited cad of him.

Of one thing he was profoundly ignorant, and that was the details of how his father made the wealth which continued to flow in. The big Printing Press Works which he occasionally visited when at home in the city were to him simply a scene of noise, bustle, dirt and confusion—all of which were extremely repugnant to the æsthetic side of his nature. He knew that there the big perfecting presses, capable of printing half a million papers a day, were being constructed, and that these presses were being used in practically all the daily newspaper press-rooms in the country—hence the continuous stream of wealth. But that he should soil his dainty, carefully manicured fingers by doing any practical work in the “shop” was never in his own thoughts nor in those of his father, who, true to his determination, wanted to keep everything smacking of trade away from his son.

Nor did the people with whom he occasionally

came in contact at the works ever strike him as so many individuals with blood in their veins of the same red color as his own, and with skins which, if the grime and soot were washed off, would be found to be as white as his. To his easy, careless mind they were so inextricably mixed up with the huge machines by which they were surrounded and which they manipulated, that they seemed to be part of these machines themselves. Nor was this because he considered himself to be an aristocrat and believed in the differentiation of human beings into the "classes" and the "masses," but simply because he was ignorant of these things.

He graduated from Yale laudably if not with the highest honors, on his twenty-first birthday. At this time his sister Gladys was eighteen years old and was finishing her education at a fashionable school for young ladies on Riverside Drive. Three months later his father died after an attack of pneumonia, without living to see what career in life his son, whom he had reared to the threshold of manhood, would cut out for himself. After the funeral of Mr. Armytage, and the first period of mourning were over, the Works went on practically the same as dur-

ing the founder's lifetime, the Manager, Mr. Silas Chubb, assuming absolute control until such time as Gladys became of age and Harold should express a willingness to take charge of the immense establishment which he and his sister had inherited.

But Harold did not seem to be in any hurry to do this. Having seen his sister returned to the finishing school, he had built for himself the finest, speediest, and costliest steam yacht which had ever been constructed in this country up to that time. In general equipment if not in size she was practically an Ocean Greyhound, capable of steaming twenty knots an hour, carrying a crew of fifty and fitted out with the luxuriousness of an Eastern potentate. This magnificent vessel when launched was christened "Alicia" by Miss Alicia Chubb, the manager's dark-eyed houri of a daughter, who broke the traditional bottle of champagne against the main mast on the quarter deck.

In the "Alicia" Harold made a cruise to Europe and the Orient. After crossing the Atlantic in six days he proceeded leisurely on his trip, stopping wherever his fancy led him and for as long a time as he felt inclined. In London he viewed the House of

Parliament and the Tower; in Paris he explored the *Quartier Latin* nor disdained a visit to the *Moulin Rouge*; he passed the winter on the Riviera and staked a pocketful of *louis-d'or* on the roulette tables of Monte Carlo. The following summer found him hunting walruses in the North, and the winter succeeding he was in the African jungles chasing tigers. Whatever harbor the "Alicia" put in he was received as the young American millionaire, a personage more obsequiously welcomed than an English lord, for wherever Harold Armytage went he scattered a golden shower before him. But however much he spent there was always more to be had at the chain of banks which, like commissary stations, dotted his route, and at which Mr. Chubb had established for him unlimited credit.

Still, while traveling in this affluent style and squandering the money earned by the sweat and toil of the two thousand employees of the Armytage Printing Press Works, Harold kept himself personally pure and uncorrupted. His innate sense of refinement prevented him from degenerating into a gambler or a libertine; his affections were not ensnared by any English maiden, Parisian *cocotte*,

dark-eyed, languishing Andalusian, or any of the fair Odalisks of the far East.

And now he was returning home after his three years' cruise, and his palace yacht was tumultuously churning the waters of the Atlantic into seas of snow-white foam, as under full steam and at her highest rate of speed she was making for this port to reach it in time for Harold to receive the welcome-home reception which he knew awaited him on the same day as the dinner party to be held in honor of Miss Gladys Armytage's twenty-first birthday.

And these festivities were to be given on the evening of the very day which witnessed the condemning of Jack McQuillan to the Electric Chair.

The young millionaire was coming home to enter into his heritage; his beautiful, high-bred sister was to come of age, while one of their workingmen was to go to Sing Sing to surrender his life, and the latter's sister was to face a future which would call on her to sacrifice what ought to be dearer than life to womankind—her honor.

CHAPTER III

TWO QUEENS OF SOCIETY

THE Armytage residence on Fifth Avenue was a corner house situated in the central portion of the Avenue and its simple brown-stone front did not much differ from that of its neighbors; it was after you ascended its broad stoop and entered its portals that you began to be impressed with its palatial grandeur and magnificence. A central corridor ran through the entire depth of the building and was covered by a Venetian glass roof the tinting of which was a work of the highest art. Galleries, running around this corridor on the four stories of the house, gave entrance to the suites of rooms on each floor, besides serving the purpose of show place for the display of the masterpieces of painting and sculpture of all ages and every clime. In the spacious drawing-room on the first floor, in the dining-room, the



library, the conservatory—in fact in all the many apartments of the large house there was everywhere visible prodigality of outlay without vulgarity of display; here, indeed, was wealth applied with an artistic discrimination which delighted the soul of the beholder. In this magnificent mansion there was nothing of the gaudy ostentation too often apparent in the homes of “self-made men”—a fact which was perhaps due as much to the ever present sense of modesty in the late Mr. Armytage as to the refining influence of his wife and children.

It was in this splendid home on the evening of the day our story opens that the friends and admirers of the brother and sister gathered to do them homage. Being always kept *en fête* by a retinue of trained domestics, there was no need of special decorations, but for this occasion, in addition to the palms and orange trees which made a tropical garden of the lower corridor and the smilax which was entwined on the walls, chandeliers and balustrades, there hung from the ceiling of the vestibule an enormous wreath of roses bearing the words “Welcome Home” in blue forget-me-nots.

It was nine o'clock in the evening and the guests

were gathering in the grand *salon*, where, standing in the blaze of the central chandelier, Miss Gladys Armytage, hostess in her own right for the first time in her life, received them.

Like a young queen she stood there—the heiress of the Armytage millions—robed in white satin and priceless lace, with diamonds glittering in her ears and hair, and flashing from her neck and bosom. Tall beyond the majority of women, with a figure that physical culture had rounded into the perfection of form, the splendor of her attire, which might have crushed an insignificant looking woman, seemed only the proper setting of the jewel it adorned. An apparition of overmastering beauty, she was at once a Venus of Society and a Juno to awe and command with a single flash of her steel-blue eyes.

She resembled her brother in general appearance, being of the same fair complexion with a profusion of golden hair framing a face glowing with perfect health, but there was that in the poise of the neck, the way she carried her shoulders, and in the gleam of her eyes which betokened a proud, indomitable spirit which made her different from her impulsive, good-natured brother. It had, indeed, been whis-



pered that Harold should have been born the girl and she the boy. She was intensely proud—proud of her father's millions and English ancestry, proud of her mother's good old Knickerbocker blood, proud of her school-girl ambitions, which made her win all the honors over her class-mates in the schoolroom as well as in their physical exercises on the campus, proud of her regal beauty of which she was fully conscious without being conceited, proud of the thought that all these qualifications were so many weapons in her hand with which to win that supreme position in society where she would reign without a rival.

To a young woman so constituted, how stale and flat and insipid must American society—with its crudities barely veneered, its shop-talk breaking through the restraints of good form at unexpected moments, its commonplace, if sturdy, democracy constantly seeking to force an entrance into the most exclusive set—have appeared. Like her brother she, too, had her day-dreams. If his took the shape of an idle life of ease and luxury with no greater occupation than to fashion a sonnet or paint a landscape, hers took a prouder, more ambitious flight. In dreams she saw herself courted and won by some titled foreigner who

would bear her away from the land of her birth where everything was only American and where everything American smacked of trade—even her father's millions. She would sometimes think of their origin with a shudder and would secretly gaze at her delicate hands as if fearful that the smut of the Printing Press Works clung to them. If only an English, German, French, Italian or Russian Count or any other nobleman, she cared not which, would take her to his own country where there were hereditary distinctions and classes, where there were castles or *châteaux*, where there were lords and their wives—ladies, and all others not of their rank seemingly created only to bow down to worship them or to obey their slightest behest!

Such were the thoughts which simmered in the brain of this haughty young lady as, with cold self-possession, she scarcely gave a bow of recognition to the vapid mass of sons of bankers, lawyers and railroad men, heirs to fortunes made in pickles, soap and pills, who hovered around her overwhelming her with their congratulations and adulations.

She was assisted in receiving the guests by Miss Alicia Chubb, her bosom friend, so far as a girl of



Gladys' disposition could have an intimate friend. As Mr. Chubb had during Mr. Armytage's lifetime been second in authority in the business, and since the founder's death had been in supreme control, it naturally followed that his wife and daughter should move in practically the same circle of society as the Armytages.

Mrs. Chubb was a quiet home body who never forgot her simple New England rearing, during which she used to pride herself on her thrifty methods of housekeeping. As her husband's position in life advanced and they could afford to keep first one and then several servants, she would constantly lament that she could find nothing for her busy hands to do. She afterwards, however, found out that she had more than her hands full in trying to rear her daughter Alicia, and in acting as a sort of chaperon to the motherless Gladys. The latter treated her with the good-humored familiarity that one extends to a faithful, motherly housekeeper, while Alicia laid down the law which her mother was expected to implicitly obey, and this Mrs. Chubb had done ever since Alicia at the tender age of ten decidedly showed that she had a mind of her own. That was twelve years ago,

and now at twenty-two years of age she had reduced her mother to such a state of helpless servitude to her whims that the dazed and bewildered old lady would have tried to fetch the moon down from the sky if Alicia had expressed a desire for it.

One of the laws laid down by Alicia for her own as well as for her mother's guidance was to be and keep on intimate social terms with the Armytages. She had the same music and dancing teachers, went to the same fashionable ladies' seminary, and, by making herself generally useful to the young heiress, found herself always invited to the children's and young folks' parties which Mr. Armytage gave before Gladys had been introduced into society.

She had been Gladys' school-mate, graduating a year before she did, her companion on vacation trips, and in and out of the Armytage residence almost as much as her own home. Under these circumstances it was only natural that a boy and girl attachment should have sprung up between Harold and Alicia. She was good to look at, of a dark, languishing style of beauty, more Southern in type than one would expect to find in one whose parents were Yankees. Though not so tall as Gladys she was



more voluptuous in shape. Gladys had the cold, serene beauty of a goddess chiseled in marble, but Alicia's was the *beauté de diable* which betokened a heart as determined to conquer the object of its passion as Alicia was bound to follow out the colder dictates of her mind.

And the goal of Alicia's passionate nature was Harold Armytage's love. His wealth counted for little in her eyes, for her father's income was by no means inconsiderable. She was her father's confidante much more than her mother was, and knew how well, if secretly, he had invested the savings of his large salary in speculative enterprises, so much so that he was on the road to become a millionaire if he was not already one. No, she would have worshipped Harold just the same if he had been the pauper son of a poverty-stricken sire. He was her ideal of a man; her king; her idol; and to win him had been the overmastering desire of her life ever since she had begun to think of love or lovers.

Did he reciprocate her love? That she could not honestly acknowledge even to herself. Her beauty charmed him as it did every man who gazed upon it; he admired her liveliness of wit, the quickness of her

intellect, her gay repartee; he was flattered, perhaps unconsciously, by her praises of his poems and by the appreciative manner in which she accepted the gift of some trifle he had painted—but all this did not imply that ardent affection which her fiery nature demanded.

She knew that the girl of nineteen is far more mature in her thoughts concerning the tender passion than is a youth of twenty-one fresh from college, who may dream of love and passion in the abstract without feeling the necessity for their embodiment in a concrete female form; and that was their respective ages when they had been last together. Then, at Harold's request, she had christened his yacht with her name. Since then he had traversed many climes and had doubtless seen many fair, eligible and lovely women; would he come back to her heart-whole? He had left her a lovely bud about to burst open into the beauteous flower of womanhood; he would return to find her in the full bloom of her gorgeous beauty.

If all that had gone before, even the incident of her naming the yacht, counted for nothing, as long as some other fair maiden had not captivated his fancy,

she felt, in the proud consciousness of her dazzling charms, that she could and would enslave his heart.

These were the thoughts surging through her mind and causing her bosom to swell with agitation as she stood there at Gladys' side, her dark beauty and pale, pink silken gown forming an admirable foil to the other's fair loveliness and white lustrous satin. They would be soon determined for her, for life-long weal or woe, for a telegram had been received that the "Alicia" was safe in port, and that the young heir could be expected to arrive in half an hour's time.

Meanwhile there were constantly new arrivals among the guests. At the drawing-room entrance a pompous butler stood in a glory of plush and plumes, announcing the visitors in a sonorous voice and taking sad liberties with the proper pronunciation of their names.

"His Honor, the Recorder of the City of New York, and Mr. Silas Chubb," announced this functionary.

Mr. Chubb entered first. He was tall, lean and lank, his lantern-jawed face not unlike that of "Uncle Sam" as he is familiarly pictured, with the same

deep-sunken, piercing eyes, high cheekbones, prominent nose and firm, protruding chin covered by a wisp of grayish beard. He was, in fact, a perfect Yankee in appearance with all of a Yankee's cunning and smartness, by which from an humble understrapper he had made himself the indispensable factotum of the late founder and was now the virtual head of the great establishment. There was no trace of his daughter's warm-blooded Southern impulsiveness in him—that must have come from ancestors on her mother's side. Every act he did, every word he spoke in his low silky tones, was after due deliberation and with a careful foresight of the consequences.

He now ushered in the very magistrate who had that afternoon sentenced one of his former employees to death. The Recorder's coming to that house was not a premeditated act on the part of His Honor; he was, in fact, not an invited guest. If he had been it would have made no difference in his judicial action of the afternoon. He was a grave, austere, elderly man, portly in build, with a knowledge of the law which made him pre-eminent in his chosen profession and a determination to execute it which had won for him the sobriquet of "The Terror of the



Bench" and the wholesome fear of all evil-doers. He tried conscientiously to perform his duty as he perceived it—to acquit the innocent and punish the guilty.

After performing his judicial functions he had gone to his home and, finding his family away on a visit, had donned evening dress and repaired to his club for dinner. There he had met Mr. Chubb, whose wife and daughter had gone ahead to the Armytage residence to assist Gladys in her preparations for the evening. The two men were fellow members and casual acquaintances, so that naturally, after they had dined together, Mr. Chubb had suggested his coming with him to the reception. The Recorder had demurred on the ground that he had not been invited, but Mr. Chubb had overruled this objection by stating truthfully enough that any assemblage in the city would feel honored by the presence of so distinguished a personage as the Recorder, and then, a cab having been called, the two drove to the Armytage mansion.

As Mr. Chubb now led the Recorder forward to present him to Miss Armytage, little did either of the men think what an important bearing on future

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events His Honor's presence in that home this evening would be.

The next announcement by the personage in plush at the door was :

"Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster," followed by a jumble of words which sounded like "The Markiss de Bel River." An audible murmur ran through the assemblage as the two personages so announced entered the drawing-room, and, being late comers, attracted the gaze of all eyes as they proceeded to pay their homage to the young hostess.

"The Marquis de Belle-Riviere," confidentially whispered one gentleman into the ear of another ; "he's the genuine article, just arrived from Paris."

"To capture an American heiress, I suppose," replied the one addressed.

"The Marquis! And Mrs. Van has him in tow, of course," sighed a mother with several eligible daughters to another similarly encumbered.

"It's a dead set for Gladys and the Armytage millions, you mark my words," replied mother number two.

CHAPTER IV

MRS. VAN AND THE MARQUIS

ONE of the delightful mysteries of New York society was Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster, or Mrs. Van, as she was familiarly called. She knew everybody who was anybody, and not to know her was to read oneself out of the charmed circle of which Murray Hill was then the centre. Yet what did anybody know of her? If there was one person who affirmed that she knew and talked French like a native Parisian, there were others who were ready to declare that in her correspondence she habitually misspelled the simplest English words. Some gave her credit for the most critical taste in Etruscan pottery, of Cloisonné and peach-blow vases, while others found her lamentably deficient in the ordinary details of American history. There were those who, judging from her familiarity with

the British Ambassador at Washington and the Consul-General of the United Kingdom at New York, frequent visitors at her home, and from her correspondence with any number of English dukes and duchesses, counts and countesses and other titled members of the British aristocracy, assumed that she was perhaps descended from some scion of the British peerage. Others, hearing her occasional loud voice—it was whispered that she fairly screeched when excited—and noticing her tall, portly form, which involuntarily reminded one of a kitchen dragoon, and her large hands, which, in spite of all the arts of the manicure, would persist in remaining red and coarse looking, wondered whether she had ever been in domestic service.

There was indeed an awful rumor, never even whispered when she was present, that she had been before her marriage some sort of an upper housemaid to her first husband, Mr. Van Courtlandt, and although she had, with commendable ambition, perfected herself in all the society accomplishments—could now, at least, chatter French, talk bric-à-brac, give her opinion on Wagner, Offenbach and Strauss—she had not considered it necessary to remedy the

defects of her early neglected education in reading, writing and arithmetic.

It was known that Mr. Van Courtlandt died leaving her a moderate competence and an only child, a daughter whom she reared with an eye single to that daughter's future destiny, which was to marry her off to some younger son of a British nobleman. This she accomplished, as she had a habit of accomplishing about everything she undertook, and the wedding was duly celebrated with great pomp at Grace Church, after which the young couple sailed for England, where they permanently made their home, and, sad to relate, "cut" their respective mamma and mother-in-law. They never paid her a visit, though she made frequent trips abroad, and she saw her daughter only in mixed assemblages, never in the intimacy of the latter's home.

This was indeed unfilial, but who can tell that it was not part of the bargain which gave Miss Gracie Van Courtlandt for a husband a major in the British Army who, in the event of the death of several brothers and their children, would become an earl in his own right? However this may be, the then Mrs. Van Courtlandt never rebelled, always spoke of her

dear son-in-law as Major, the Hon. Mr. Lonsdale, and of what a happy life her daughter the Hon. Mrs. Lonsdale was leading abroad.

Having thus happily disposed of her "encumbrance," as she privately stigmatized her daughter, the fair and still comely widow set about to find for herself a worthy successor to the late lamented Mr. Van Courtlandt. She fastened her soulful eyes and her clutches on a Mr. Nicholas DePeyster, a relative of Mrs. Armytage, who had spent the sixty years of his life a bookworm in his library and a stargazer in the amateur observatory he had established on the roof of his residence. It is probable that the aged savant never knew himself how it happened that he was wooed, won and wedded with a neatness and despatch which surprised himself as much as it did society circles.

After all, it was but an episode in his life; he went back to his books and his stars, while Mrs. Van Courtlandt added the aristocratic DePeyster to the name on her visiting cards, moved into the fashionable residence on Fifth Avenue and gave a series of receptions which were attended by the *élite* of the metropolis. Mr. DePeyster did not last long after



his matrimonial venture; within two years he had quitted star-gazing and gone to the happy land where buxom widows cease from troubling and old bachelors are at rest. Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster found, much to her chagrin, that her present handsome residence was about all she had gained by her matrimonial tactics, since her late husband had spent whatever wealth he otherwise possessed in a lot of astronomical instruments which she promptly sold for so much old junk. Besides, when she entered into her second matrimonial venture, she had been obliged, under the will, to surrender the income she had been receiving from her first husband's estate.

Altogether things began to look pretty blue for the doubly bereft widow when the bright idea struck her that, since the average American heiress was hunting for a husband with a foreign title, while any number of impecunious noblemen were seeking an alliance with the daughters of wealth and fashion to prop up their tottering rank, she might make a good thing of it by acting as a sort of marriage broker between them. She had been so highly successful in the case of her own daughter, that, aided by her social connections here and abroad, and her indomitable will,

there seemed no reason to Mrs. Van why she should not be equally successful in her new and highly genteel profession.

And so she found it. Alliances were made neatly and quickly; receptions in her magnificent mansion increased in frequency and the number of guests; there was in her parlors a steady stream of young society buds with their mammas on the one hand and recently arrived scions of nobility of all climes and all degrees on the other. The daily papers chronicled with greater frequency these Anglo-American, Franco-American, German-American and other similarly hyphenated alliances, deploring the sudden craze for these kinds of matches which seemed to have taken possession of the fair maids in our exclusive set—and it was all grist for the Widow DePeyster's mill.

She was in the very zenith of her glory, fairly rolling in wealth, when the Marquis de Belle-Riviere, a few weeks before the opening of this story, came to her with letters of accreditation from her agent in Paris, with the request to throw open for him the magic portals of metropolitan society, that he might enter that modern paradise in search of an end-of-the-nineteenth-century peri.



Mrs. Van's Paris agent informed her that the Marquis' ancestor, the Duc de Belle-Riviere, was a Maréchal of France and commanded a regiment at the siege of Rochelle; that the family were great Royalists during the Revolution and tried to rescue Louis XVI from the guillotine; that another Belle-Riviere was a peer of France and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and so through a long family history, which was undoubtedly a reflex of the national pride and glory of France.

But magnificent as was the glory of the Belle-Rivieres, equally magnificent was their style of living; so much so that it became proverbial in Paris to say that the wealth of a living Belle-Riviere was exceeded only by the enormous debts he left behind him when he died. That was the case until the Franco-Prussian War broke out. With the fall of Napoleon III and the establishment of the Republic, so many of the hereditary privileges of the seigneurs had been lopped off that, while the family debts continued to accumulate, the family income kept becoming smaller and smaller every year.

The present Duc de Belle-Riviere, the head of the family, was a childless old man of eighty, in his

ruined château of Belle-Riviere on the banks of the Rhone, lamenting the past glories of his race. He had buried his wife and son and was seemingly kept alive only by the hope that his nephew, the Marquis, would marry a wealthy heiress, and with her dowry restore the estate in the country and the residence on the Faubourg Sainte-Germain to their regal grandeur.

This the Marquis was perfectly willing to do, but where was he to find the heiress? Like in so many French families, he was an only child, and at the successive deaths of his father and mother had promptly proceeded to make ducks and drakes of the fortunes he had inherited from each.

Since then he lived, so to speak, on the interest of his debts and the small allowance his uncle was able to make him. He was now forty years of age. His still handsome dark face, with its black, piercing eyes, Roman nose and black moustache, showed only slight traces of the life usually led by the young bloods of the gayest capital in the world. He was a superb duellist and a hunter of renown; his horses had won him many a Grand Prix in the races at Longchamps as well as occasionally being in the



lead in the Derby, while he was equally at home in the fashionable clubs at Paris and the green tables at Monte Carlo, where his daring had often won him the profound admiration of less audacious players.

He had never had an unselfish love for woman in his life. He admired the fair sex as a whole too much to limit his affections to any particular one. Besides, he knew what was desired of him by his uncle the Duke, whom he wished to please, and whose aspirations he shared; it was to restore the ancient glories of the house of Belle-Riviere by a wealthy marriage. It was all very nice, but there was no hurry about it. A husband in France has his wings considerably clipped, and only among the peasants or working classes are there still illusions about love's young dream and early conjugal bliss. So he spent his evenings, when he was not otherwise engaged, in the company of the Rose Pompons and the Zoo-Zoos and other more or less well-known women of the Théâtre Variétés or demi-mondaines of the Moulin Rouge.

Thus he allowed the years to slip by until one morning he found himself forty years of age, get-

ting stout of figure and bald of head, and awoke to the necessity that it was about time to seriously seek the wealthy heiress. But where was a young girl with at least five million francs in her own right to be found? That sum was the lowest that would be needed to properly restore the estate in the country, to keep up the establishment in Paris, and to provide for his own luxurious tastes. If the lady who was to be made Marquise now and Duchess later had more than that amount, so much the better, but she must have it at her own absolute disposal—there must be no hindrances in the shape of parents or guardians. It would have to be his to dispose of after marriage. Besides, she would have to be *pleasing*; the ladies Belle-Riviere had all been noted for their beauty of person, the accomplishments of their minds and the grace and affability of their dispositions. He could not, in justice to them or to his own refined tastes, introduce a homely, ill-bred, uneducated parvenue among such a galaxy, no matter how great a fortune she possessed.

He knew that the paragon he wanted could not be found in France, where there are but few million-

aires, and a dowry of 200,000 francs was deemed sufficient to endow the bride of a prince. He would have to look for her in England or America—those blessed countries where there were iron kings and coal barons and great captains of industry who were able and willing to give their daughters millions of British pounds sterling or Yankee dollars to buy for them a titled husband.

He was hesitating as to which country he would honor first with his matrimonial explorations when he made the chance acquaintance at one of his clubs of Harold Armytage, who was then dawdling in Paris on his way home from his tour of the world. They became fairly intimate during the month that Harold remained in Paris, and during this time the Marquis learned all about Gladys Armytage and even saw her portrait which her brother carried with him. Here was the very paragon he was seeking—young, beautiful, accomplished, with a fortune of two million dollars, equal to ten million francs, and, best of all, an orphan about to become of age and mistress of her own wealth. Here was the Marquise par excellence for him. He was too shrewd to declare his intentions to Harold. There

was no need to awaken a possible antagonism in advance. The two parted the best of friends, Harold to continue his desultory trip by setting sail in his yacht for a month's sojourn in London, while Etienne, as the Marquis was called by his familiars, hunted up a marriage broker whom he heard had American connections.

The Marquis was delighted to discover that the broker operated through Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster, a distant relative by marriage to the Army-tages, and the very next steamer of the Franco-American line bore him and his fortunes across the Atlantic. All this was made plain to Mrs. Van when he had duly presented himself to her and given her his letters of accreditation, and she made it equally plain to the French nobleman, though in the most diplomatic manner, that she expected to receive a goodly slice of Gladys' dowry when it came into his possession. These preliminaries duly arranged, Mrs. Van set about to procure a card for the Marquis for Gladys' reception and Harold's welcome home. Mrs. Van told Gladys that the Marquis had made her brother's acquaintance in

Paris, which made it seem natural for him to be present at Harold's home coming.

Thus it was that the Marquis de Belle-Riviere was able to present his homage to the great American heiress,

CHAPTER V

THE HEIR'S RETURN

THE subdued sounds of a distant and hidden orchestra floated through the drawing-room as, the presentation being over, the guests at the Armytage mansion broke up into groups whiling away the time in conversation until the young master should appear.

Some went to view the really magnificent collection of paintings in the art gallery; others proceeded to the conservatory, where gigantic palms spread their umbrageous foliage and the air was heavy with the perfume of a thousand exotics, while the tinkling of the water in the fountain formed a sort of rhythmic accompaniment to the gentle strains of the music that here made themselves faintly heard. It was the younger set that naturally favored the conservatory; some took advantage of the rustic nooks to

indulge in some rather audacious flirting; the group in which we are more particularly interested, that which surrounded Gladys Armytage and Alicia Chubb, were standing near the fountain.

The presence of a real live Marquis and heir to a dukedom naturally acted on the ordinarily not too exuberant spirits of the Sons of Somebody like a wet blanket, and the young heirs of fortunes made in stocks or railroads or soap or pickles contented themselves with staring at the foreign nobleman in an endeavor to get tips on the real thing in French manners and the cut of French clothes. This left the conversation to be monopolized by the Marquis and the two ladies, with only an occasional interjection from the "Willie-boys," since it was carried on exclusively in French, which both Gladys and Alicia spoke fluently.

"I suppose, Marquis, that you have already been asked the inevitable question," said Alicia, "how do you like America?"

"Before I had left the ship an hour," he replied with a smile; "that was two weeks ago. Since then I have visited your Central Park, your museums, academies of fine arts and libraries; beyond that I

am ignorant. Of your grand and beautiful Hudson, of the wonders of Niagara Falls, I am sorry to say I know nothing of my own observation."

"And of our society?" asked Gladys.

"This evening is my début, thanks to your gracious courtesy," replied the Marquis with a bow which each "Willie-boy" secretly determined to practice an hour each evening before his mirror.

"Well, now that you have seen us, *chez nous*, what do you think of us?" daringly asked Alicia.

"It is not necessary to come to her native land to sound the praises of *la belle Americaine*. Go to London, to Berlin, to my own Paris, climb the Alps or sail along the Mediterranean, wherever you go there you will find a girl with a form as straight as a sapling, a figure plump but not stout, lithe but not lean, a figure which, whether by nature or physical culture, has been brought to a state of simple perfection. On a swan-like neck is poised a head which bears itself with the conscious pride of its own sovereignty. Yet its hauteur is tempered by a laughing oval face with cheeks of a creamy hue and velvet texture which are the despair of beauties of other climes. Her smiling lips reveal two rows of perfect

teeth, her nose seems to have been lent her by Venus of Milo, while there is in her large, flashing eyes a *je ne sais quoi* which makes you think she is *le vrai diable* if you did not know she was *une ange pure et simple*. You ask your neighbor who she is and the invariable answer is, '*la belle Americaine*.' "

"Say, by Jove," muttered one of the "Willie-boys" who knew his Ollendorff, "that's a corker. If I could string off something like that I'd be right in it with the girls."

"You have described, and very eloquently, the American girl abroad," said Gladys, "and now that you have seen her in her native land——"

"I have seen her," he finished with courtly grace, "amid surroundings which, like the setting of a priceless jewel, enhance her brilliant beauty!"

"But, Marquis," interjected Alicia, with a charming pout, "you have described the typical American girl and she is always a blonde, while poor me, I am a brunette, with a skin as dark——"

"Ah, mademoiselle," he interrupted, with a Louis XIV bow, "do not disparage yourself. Mademoiselle Chubb has the *beauté de diable* which in many

eyes is even more attractive than the fair, angel's face——”

“Such as you would imply I possess,” merrily interposed Gladys. “Ah, Monsieur le Marquis, even you Frenchmen, with all your *savoir faire*, are not able to compliment one lady but at the expense of another.”

“Pardon, mademoiselle,” he quickly retorted, “I did not imply my own particular preference.”

He accompanied the words with a look which made Gladys feel slightly uncomfortable, and she would have hastened to change the topic of conversation had not the approach of a servant obviated the necessity.

He came to announce that her brother had arrived and was in his room changing his traveling clothes for evening dress.

“Harold!” she cried. “Home at last! Oh, I must rush to greet him! Marquis, excuse me for a few minutes. The girl with the *beauté de diable* will entertain you until I return with my brother.”

“I, too, shall be glad to greet Monsieur Armytage and renew our Paris acquaintance,” said the Marquis.

"Alicia, please inform the guests and bid them assemble in the drawing-room. We will be down in fifteen minutes."

Alicia had turned first pale, then crimson, on hearing of Harold's arrival. The moment she had longed for during the last three years had come. She was soon to meet him again; one look into his eyes would tell her whether her heart's desire would be realized or her hopes be blighted forever. Now that the supreme moment had arrived she was glad that propriety forbade her rushing off with Gladys and greeting Harold with all the familiarity of the olden days. She preferred to read her fate in the open glare of the gas lights and amid a crowd which would impose a feeling of self-restraint on her impetuous nature.

She, therefore, readily acquiesced in Gladys' request and she and the Marquis moved away to perform the service asked of her, while Gladys, whose sole human passion was her absorbing love for her brother, rushed out of the conservatory up a flight of stairs to the suite of apartments set aside for the young heir.

Harold had donned his dress trousers and shirt with the aid of his valet, and was adjusting his white

lawn tie when his sister knocked at the door of his room.

"It is I, Gladys," she announced; "may I come in?"

"Open the door, Parker," said Harold, "it's Sis."

While the servant went to execute the order the young millionaire tourist rose to his feet, and, as his sister came rushing into the room, he received her with outstretched arms.

"Oh, I am so glad, so glad to see you," murmured Gladys, after the first outburst of emotion, wiping the tears from her eyes. "I was beginning to fear you would never come home again."

"Say, Gladys, you must excuse my undress uniform," he said, as he kissed her again and again. "I didn't want to keep you waiting while I donned my vest and coat. So this is the little girl I left at school three years ago," he continued, holding her off at arm's length the better to survey her. "My, and what a wonderful toilet."

"Come, don't poke fun at me right off," she rejoined with a happy laugh. "Wait till you see Alicia, then you'll see what real beauty is."

"Oh, I dare say," he replied indifferently. "When

I left she had in her the making of a very lovely woman, though I can't say that I admire brunettes very much."

Alas, poor Alicia!

"I suppose she is here," he added.

"Yes, and any number of other guests besides, all waiting to greet the prodigal on his return and to partake of the fatted calf in the shape of a dinner prepared in his honor."

"Not altogether in my honor," he rejoined with a smile. "If I remember rightly my little sister has come of age to-day."

"Then you must stop calling me your little sister," she laughed. "I am above the average height of girls, almost as tall as you, and you're a six-footer. But come, hurry up with your dressing. They're all waiting downstairs for us."

"And who are the 'all'?" he asked as his valet handed him his vest to put on.

"Oh, I can't bother to tell you now. You'll know most everybody. I think you even know the Marquis de Belle-Riviere, who is one of our guests this evening."

"Yes, if it's Etienne; I made his acquaintance in

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Paris. A high liver and not exactly a saint, but about as good a chap as titled Frenchmen generally are."

"You have heard nothing derogatory about him?"

"No, not that I can say. He puts up a pretty stiff game at *écarte* and has quite an expensive stable, but that's nothing more than can be alleged against hundreds of other men in his circle of life. But why do you ask?" he questioned, gazing quizzically at her. "Are you interested in him?"

"In him personally not a bit," she candidly confessed—"he was introduced to me only an hour ago—in his title, yes. The Belle-Rivieres are a grand and noble family. They have helped to make the history of France. You know," she added confidentially, "I always was a great lover of titles."

Harold burst out laughing.

"I'm afraid my little—I mean my big sister," he said, "isn't much of a democrat."

"No," she admitted, with an air of supreme disdain, "I don't like common people."

By this time her brother had completed his toilet and, taking his sister by the hand, they left the room

together and descended the broad staircase leading to the drawing-room.

There Harold was greeted effusively on all sides and welcomed home, many complimenting him on his splendid physical appearance. And, indeed, he never had looked better in his life; the touch of effeminacy which had marked his looks had given way to robust manhood under the influence of his three years' tour on land and sea. In spite of his conventional evening dress, relieved only by a boutonnière of lilies-of-the-valley, his figure of an athlete, broad shoulders, fair Saxon face and wavy, golden hair gave him the appearance of a Norse god.

So at least he seemed to the eyes of Alicia, who was among the last to press forward with her good wishes, and who kept furtively gazing at him while he chided her for her tardiness in coming forward to greet him, and recounted to her their childhood's pranks and follies in the same familiar way. She knew, she instinctively felt, that he was not impressed with her added beauty, that no tender recollection of her had beguiled him during his absence or stirred his heart, as hers was stirred at this moment when they met again.

"He does not love me," she murmured as she turned from him to mingle with the throng. "But shall I despair? No, no. His heart may be but sleeping and I may yet find the magic wand that shall awaken it. I'll not surrender him until I have found a rival—and, perhaps, not even then."

Harold's greeting with the Marquis de Belle-Riviere was cordial and friendly, while the latter begged for a continuance of the acquaintance so auspiciously begun in Paris. He explained his presence in this country to a desire to view the wonders of the new world.

"And which wonder do you think you will find the greatest?" asked Harold.

"Its beautiful women," frankly admitted the Marquis.

Remembering what his sister had told him about her penchant for titles, Harold gazed after the Marquis when he had passed to make room for the others, and then, shrugging his shoulders, muttered:

"Ah, well, it's none of my affair. My sister is old enough to know her own mind."

Mr. Silas Chubb presented the Recorder.

"This is indeed an honor," said Harold, as he

shook hands with the distinguished magistrate. "Your Honor's fame as an upright judge is not limited by the shores of our native land. Both in England and France I have heard the Recorder of the City of New York praised for the soundness of his decisions and his profound learning as a jurist."

"We've had an example of it this very day," chimed in Mr. Chubb. "He has sentenced to be electrocuted one of our own men convicted of murder in the first degree."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Harold, greatly surprised at the information. "One of our own men a convicted murderer!"

"Mr. Chubb ought not to have referred to the matter," said the magistrate. "This is hardly an occasion to speak about such things. As to your courteous allusions to me, I can only say that as a magistrate I always try to do my duty as my conscience dictates."

Harold would have liked to inquire further about this murder, but just then the silken portières, which separated the exquisite dining-room from the drawing-room, were swept aside and dinner was announced.

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When the guests had all been seated at the places assigned to them, Harold was glad to find that he had the Recorder for his *vis-à-vis*.

"It may not be good form," he muttered, "but my curiosity is piqued and I shall find out something more about this murder before we leave the table."

CHAPTER VI

A BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

SING, O Muse, of the famous dinner served that evening at the home of the Armytages—of the feastings and drinkings, of the silver and gold services, the costly china and the scintillating glass, of the fine linen and flowers, of the decorations and general gorgeousness—all representing an outlay of money sufficient to fill ten thousand empty stomachs! Come, ye hungry and homeless ones, and delight your eyes and let your mouths water while before your vision unfolds the splendor of the spectacle and the magnificence of the banquet!

The dining-room was amply large to hold without crowding the six tables, set for eight persons each. Its hard-polished parquette floor, where it was not covered with tiger skins, glistened in the light of the great crystal candelabra pendant from the

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high, elaborately frescoed ceiling. On the walls were inlaid panels depicting hunting and fishing scenes and fantasies of fruits and flowers, all painted by famous artists. The furniture was of old Flemish oak, each table or chair a masterpiece of exquisite carving.

A well-known caterer had been given *carte-blanche*, and where the house itself possessed the resources in rare silver, costly china, scintillating glass and fine damask as did this residence, where lavish expenditure was combined with artistic taste in the preparation of a banquet, the result was necessarily a poem in gastronomic art.

Each of the six tables presented some distinctive feature. The center of one had been fashioned into a grotto, where natural palms and lilies grew in apparent profusion; another table had on it a miniature lake of real water in which a live swan disported itself; still another represented a life-like scene of a cotton plantation; a fourth had in its center a dwarf cherry tree, its branches loaded with ripe, red cherries, which the diners could pluck and eat at their pleasure; at another table was a similarly constituted orange tree, while at the principal table, probably in



delicate allusion to the source of all this display of wealth, was a miniature printing press, fashioned of glass, kept in active motion by electric power and printing souvenir menus of the banquet.

Flowers and plants were in profusion everywhere. Tall, stately palms reared their foliage-crowned heads in the corners of the room; ropes of smilax intertwined with American Beauty roses formed garlands on the walls and streamed thence to the central chandelier, making a fragrant green and crimson canopy under which the guests sat; there were large bunches of flowers at either end of each table, while at each plate was a magnificent corsage bouquet for the ladies or a dainty boutonnière for the gentlemen.

All through the dinner the dulcet strains of a hidden orchestra quivered on the heavy, perfumed air—too faint to interrupt the steady flow of conversation, yet sufficient, with the added fragrance of the flowers, to steep the soul in a sense of delicious languor.

And now enter the waiters, and the service begins. French delicacies vie with American specialties; exquisite glasses are emptied of costly

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liqueurs and glorious vintages, which, in their native Rhineland, are reserved for royalty.

A general sense of hilarity now seizes the diners; the conversation becomes more animated, while eyes sparkle and from lips that have only smiled laughter comes until the orchestra strains are no longer heard in the din of merriment that prevails.

As yet the banquet is barely half finished; there are several cantos in this poem of the cuisine still to come, although the party is becoming satiated, and ordinary mortals would fain pause here; but the French caterer has provided for this emergency. He knows how to whet the jaded appetite for what is to come with the next course; he orders the *Sherbet à la Romaine* to be served. Wonderful dish this sherbet is. It delights the eyes as well as removes every sense of satiety as you eat a spoonful of the deliciously flavored ice. It has been the overture, so to speak, of this gastronomic epic.

The roasted peacock of Lucullus is replaced in modern times by the canvas-back duck from the waters of the Chesapeake, where, in anticipation of its manifest destiny, it has flavored its own meat by a diet of wild celery. It is now brought to the table



in the style of Lucullus—that is, with feathers, wings and tail all replaced to give it an appearance of life, resting on a lake of bluish-green jelly, out of which protrude rocks of brown-tinted fried hominy. Two birds are placed on each table, and, after they have been duly admired, they are stripped of their finery and served.

The *pièce de résistance* has been partaken of, and the poem draws to a close with ices, cakes and fruits. Cordials are now passed, and the connoisseurs decide their preference. After the service of the cheese and coffee this Belshazzar-like feast comes to an end, and the diners, with what mentality is left to them, turn to listen to whatever entertainment has been provided.

The personages of this drama of real life who more particularly interest us were seated at the principal table, the one containing the miniature glass printing press. By a sort of tacit consent Mr. Silas Chubb had taken the head of the table and thus constituted himself master of ceremonies of the banquet. With characteristic modesty Harold Armytage had chosen the foot of the table; at his side were arranged *vis-à-vis* the Recorder and Mrs. Chubb; to

the right and left respectively of the general manager, Gladys Armytage and the Marquis de Belle-Riviere, and Miss Alicia Chubb with one of the omnipresent "Willie-boys."

What did they talk about while the gorging was in progress? About everything and yet nothing; the latest picture in the Academy, and the prospect of the automobiles, of which the earliest types had just been shown on the boulevards of Paris, ever becoming a fashionable mode of conveyance; Zola's newest literary shock to the sensitive nerves of society, and the virtues of Vanderbilt's new *chef*, just imported from abroad; the duty of the wealthy to ameliorate the condition of the poor and the marked improvement in breeding horses and dogs that had been attained since horse-shows and dog-shows had become fashionable functions; the tenement house problem in New York, and the wonderful natural beauties of Tuxedo Park, then recently opened to the circles of wealth and fashion. Oh, yes, they touched on almost every topic imaginable, including any amount of society scandal, but sounded the depths of none, skimming over the surface of dangerous subjects like sea-gulls over the tempestuous

waves without getting a drop of moisture on their fine plumage.

Miss Chubb was an adept at this sort of thing, which is known as society small-talk, and the liveliness of the party was mainly due to her bright, witty sayings, her aptness of repartee and her general vivacity. The Marquis was a good second to her, his Gallic sprightliness finding itself in a congenial atmosphere in her presence. He ate and drank very sparingly, for your true Frenchman is not a *gourmand*, and, while he can and does provide a twenty-course dinner with wine for others, contents himself with a dainty bit or two and a glass of his favorite beverage.

He had thus time to make observations. With a calculating eye he estimated the costliness of his surroundings while his mind was enchanted with Alicia's piquant sallies. The conclusion he inwardly came to was that the ideal wife for him would be a girl who would combine Gladys' fortune, charm and grace with Alicia's mental alertness. As the combination was impossible he decided in favor of the heiress, and, with a look which Gladys could not help but understand, informed her of his decision.

Gladys knew in that moment as well as if he had made the declaration in words that, if she so desired, she could be the Marquise de Belle-Riviere now and the Duchesse de Belle-Riviere when the aged head of the family was laid to rest with his sires. As she gazed at the callow, sap-headed youths in the room who were to be the men of affairs of the future and mentally compared them with her brother and the Marquis she wondered why not one of them was the equal of the former in anything that went to make up her ideal of American manhood, or was so inferior to the latter in the general attributes of a man of the world. If she could find an American gentleman who was the equal in her eyes of Harold Armytage, well and good—if not, rather than marry one of these incipient coal barons, sugar kings or pickle manufacturers, she would prefer to marry a foreign nobleman like the Marquis and once for all get out of this atmosphere of the newly-rich, with its flamboyant ignorance and vulgarity.

These were dangerous thoughts for a young woman to have on the celebration of her coming of age, especially as the question of love formed no part of



them. Her heart was asleep; what if it became awakened after she had made her choice?

Harold's thoughts during the banquet were of a somewhat similar strain. Back from the elegant simplicity of the higher circles in Europe in which he had moved during the last three years, he wondered why it was considered good form in American society to have such spreads as these. This ostentatious display of wealth hurt his sensitive nerves, the more so, perhaps, because it was his own and his sister's. Was it done, he wondered, for the purpose of making people forget that his father was a self-made man, who had earned his dollar-a-day wages by the sweat of his brow when he first came to this country? He, Harold, had never been ashamed of that fact. If anything, he now reproached himself with having lived such a life of ease and indolence on the wealth accumulated for him by his father, and being increased day by day by the thousands who were toiling for him in the Works. What was it the Recorder had said about the duty of the wealthy to ameliorate the condition of the poor? He would like to have that distinguished jurist say more on the subject when he was

called up, as he would be, to make an after-dinner speech. Somehow Harold felt that he had been derelict in his duty or there would have been no strike at the Works; no murder would have followed, and one of his own workmen would not that day have been condemned to the electric chair. He would like to see that man—hear his story from his own lips.

His thoughts were interrupted at this point by Mr. Silas Chubb rising to his feet to call the assemblage to order.

It was not an easy thing for Mr. Chubb to accomplish this, for the worthy gentleman had done ampler justice to the various wines than to the food, and found his feet rather stubborn, and his tongue with a tendency to cling to the roof of his mouth. Still this little eccentricity passed off unnoticed in the general hilariousness of the audience, which, after some difficulty, Mr. Chubb reduced to a semblance of decorum.

After a reference to the occasion which they were celebrating that evening and a few complimentary phrases to Gladys and Harold, Mr. Chubb proceeded:

"We have the honor of having with us this evening that eminent jurist and distinguished magistrate, the Recorder of the City of New York, and in calling on him to address us, I believe I am expressing the desire of the leading representatives of finance, railroads and commerce gathered at these tables to hear from him how, as a stern and upright judge, he has this very day done his share in stemming the tide of communism and anarchy which threatened to sweep away the very foundations of law and order. Ladies and gentlemen, the Recorder."

If his brain had not been slightly affected by the wine he had drunk, Mr. Chubb probably would not have broached a subject which was so utterly out of place, and the announcement of which filled with dismay the hearts of those present who would have preferred something in the nature of a vaudeville show with *décolleté* trimmings. The presence of the ladies and of His Honor, the Recorder, naturally, however, forbade the introduction at this dinner of what was then and still is a great society fad.

The Recorder felt that he had been placed in an embarrassing position, but got out of it by declining to detail the circumstances of the trial over which he



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had presided—much to the disappointment of Harold—and confining himself to a statement of what was the best way to counteract this spirit of communism and lawlessness, which he declared permeated the working classes.

“You, gentlemen of wealth and leisure,” he said among other things, “should be the instruments to accomplish this great work of making the humbler classes content with the lot in which it has pleased Providence to place them. I have spoken to Mr. Armytage during the dinner here about the duty the rich owe to the poor, and I will say a few words on that subject to you millionaire railroad men and captains of industry. You should look upon the wealth which has come to you by reason of your superior intelligence and activity as a divinely commissioned trust which you are to administer with a due sense of your responsibility to the God who gave it to you. Remember that a tenth of all you have is the Lord’s, and distribute it in the cause of religion and charity. Seek out the poor and lowly, use your own superabundance to make their lives more comfortable and happy, and, believe me, discontent and disorder will disappear. At the ex-

pense of one-tenth of your fortune you will preserve to yourselves the other nine-tenths."

He sat down amid a whirlwind of applause, in which, however, Harold Armytage did not join. There seemed to him to be a false factor in this easy solution of such a serious problem. He did not like the idea that he was the steward of his own riches. If he was, then all the poor, all the wretched and unfortunate had a right to call him to a rigid account of his stewardship. Neither did he like the mercenary idea of buying immunity for himself and his fortune at the price of one-tenth of his estate or of any other fraction of it. Not only was it greedy and selfish as far as the rich were concerned, but it savored also of coercion and blackmail on the part of those who were to benefit by such a scheme.

"There must be some other way out," he muttered to himself. "Would that I could find some one to point it out to me."

Was it in answer to his wish that at that moment the butler nudged his elbow and whispered to him that there was a priest in the reception-room who said he had come from the Tombs and who earnestly

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desired an interview with the master in behalf of the man who had that day been condemned to death?

This information went through Harold's frame like a thrill of electricity. Here was the very man coming to tell the very thing he most wished to know. He half rose to follow the butler into the reception-room; then, as he surveyed the remnants of the feast, the half-emptied bottles and glasses, the heated faces of the banqueters, the atmosphere of luxuriousness and dissipation, if not actual debauchery, which hovered all around him, he was irresistibly reminded of Belshazzar's feast, and mechanically gazed at the opposite wall as if expecting to see there in letters of fire: *Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin!*

This priest, bursting in on this assemblage, would be like the coming of Daniel to the wine-inflamed Babylonian king and his cohorts. Yes, he would have him up here. If for no other reason, it would give a dramatic touch to an otherwise insipid affair.

"Bring the priest up here," he whispered to the butler, and resumed his seat.

A minute or two later the butler ushered into the banquet-hall a tall, muscular man, with cleanshaven

face and tonsured head, clad in the solemn habiliments of the Catholic priesthood.

It was the Soggarth Aroon.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOGGARTH AROON

HE who was known as the Soggarth Aroon, or the Priest of the People, is too recently deceased to require more than a passing tribute to his memory. If ever a man was called of God to spread the benign influence of religion among the masses, to comfort the sick and needy, to dry the tears of the widow and orphan, to preach the gospel of hope to the despairing—he was the man. Assigned to a parish wherein the poor were counted by thousands and the wealthy of his faith were few, he demanded of the latter that they should give of their superabundant means to the many charities he instituted and to the upbuilding of the church of which he was the beloved pastor. As for himself, he asked for nothing, he wanted nothing but the barest subsistence, a simple cot whereon to sleep, the most frugal

of meals and a clerical attire that often was permitted to become threadbare and shiny from use before it was renewed.

He came to his church to find it attended mainly by the poor, with a scant treasury and insignificant in influence. After devoting the best years of his life to its upbuilding, he surrendered it to his successor at the request of his superiors, one of the most powerful and wealthy congregations in the City of New York. That day of separation not only parted him from those who knew him best and loved him most, but also, for the time being, put him beyond the pale of the church he so dearly loved. From that hour his field of action became world-wide; the entire universe became his parish.

Denied the right to administer the holy sacrament in his church, he preached to a greater multitude from the platform and through the public press; preached the simple doctrine of the Golden Rule and of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. And the multitude heard him gladly. Before his death he was restored to the bosom of the Church. As an obedient son, he went to a small parish in an interior city, where he continued doing

good in his restricted sphere of action until he was wafted up by the Angel of Death to the Heaven he had assuredly earned. It was while the Soggarth Aroon was under the ban of the Church and devoting a portion of his time comforting those who were in prison, that he entered the courtroom just as Jack McQuillan, the striker, had been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. He it was who raised Maggie's head on his knee when the poor girl swooned at hearing her brother's doom. He remained with her in the courtroom after all the rest, except a couple of court officers, had been requested to leave, and, with the assistance of the officers, bathed the girl's forehead and fanned her until consciousness returned.

When Maggie opened her eyes again and partly raised herself up, supported by the priest, she gave a wild, bewildered gaze about her, then, remembering where she was and what had happened, she burst into tears and cried:

"Oh, Jack, Jack, they've gone and done it, an' he said as how they wouldn't!"

The Soggarth Aroon had been informed by the court officers who she was, and he deeply sympa-

thized with her, though he did not quite comprehend her somewhat incoherent words.

"My poor girl," he said in that rich, mellow voice for which he was noted and which always went straight to the heart of the person addressed, "I can feel for you. But take courage; all is not yet lost. Your brother's case can be appealed, and as a last resort you can apply to the Governor."

Maggie shook her head disconsolately.

"What have we poor people got to do with such things?" she rejoined, at the same time releasing herself from his supporting arm and struggling to her feet. "If the lawyers couldn't do nothin' for Jack at the trial, how are we going ter raise money for an appeal—an' all the papers they tell me's got ter be printed, too?"

"Say, Maggie," interrupted one of the court officers, "don't yer know that the state pays for all that in murder cases?"

"Yes," chimed in the other; "an' ther lawyer wot's assigned by ther court ain't got no right ter charge for their services neither."

Maggie looked at the two men in a startled way, while her face became so pale that the priest feared

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she was about to faint again. She, however, struggled against the inclination to swoon, and breathlessly asked :

"Is that true, father?"

"I believe it is, my child," he answered.

"An' I believed him," she cried, wringing her hands, "when he told me the money was needed, and that there weren't no other way ter raise it. An' he said he had a pull with ther court, too. Oh, my God—my God! Wot have I done?"

She burst into tears and sobbed so long and bitterly that all three men were frightened.

"Calm yourself, Maggie," soothed the priest. "You cannot help your brother if you become hysterical. Have courage. Let me be your friend as well as your priest. If any money is needed to bring your brother's case to a higher court or even to apply to the Governor of the State for a pardon or a remission of the sentence, I will procure it for you."

Maggie sought to dry her eyes and to repress her emotion. She listened to him with downcast head, but the expression of dull despair remained on her face.

"Oh, you're good—so good, father!" she murmured, raising his hand and pressing it to her lips; "but it's too late—too late now," she added with a deep sigh.

"What do you mean, Maggie?" he asked. "I have thought for some time that you are speaking in riddles. You keep referring to some mysterious *he* and now you say it is too late. What do you mean?"

"Don't ask me—don't ask me now," she replied with a shudder, edging away from him. "Sunday, father, I will come to you for confession and——"

"Alas, my poor child," he interrupted with a deep sigh, "I am no longer permitted to perform that sacrament."

She did not seem to hear him or to comprehend his meaning, but continued:

"Oh, why are we kept ignorant? If we poor people's got enny rights, why don't they tell us of them? Wot should I know—a poor working-girl whose brother gets into great trouble—that ther law is free for us, that we don't have to hire lawyers or pay for pulls? We don't know. I didn't know it, an'

none of my girl friends knew it. That's why I believed him, father."

"Him?—who?" exclaimed the astounded priest.

Maggie gazed furtively around the empty courtroom as if she expected some one of whom she stood in deadly fear to suddenly arise before her.

"Don't ask me," she then cried. "I couldn't, I dassent tell yer. I—I feel stronger now, father. Please let me go home. An'—an' you see Jack an' comfort him. I couldn't bear to go to him to-day. But I'll see him before—before they takes him up ther river. I—I will if—if *he* allows me ter."

And seemingly fearful lest she might be forced to explain herself further, she suddenly again raised the priest's hand to her lips, covered her head with her shawl, and fairly ran out of the courtroom.

One of the court officers was about to dash after her, but the Soggarth Aroon held him back by a gesture of his hand.

"Let her go," said the good priest. "It is evident she has some private sorrow on her mind in addition to the terrible grief of knowing that her brother has been condemned to death. I will go to see her brother now. He will give me her address and then

I will call on her when she is calmer and offer her the sweet consolations of religion."

So saying, he left the courtroom and wended his way to the Tombs. By this time it was already dusk and the early fall night was beginning to set in. Unmindful of the fact that it was the supper hour he overcame whatever hunger he felt and presented himself at the visitors' entrance to the prison. It was of course long past the hour for visitors to see their relatives or friends, but the Soggarth Aroon was so well known to the keepers, and his visits were always so consoling to the prisoners that he was readily admitted. A keeper conducted him to what is known as Murderers' Row, and they passed along the row until they came to the cell occupied by the doomed man. The light from a gas jet in the corridor sent a faint gleam between the iron bars of the gate and dimly illuminated the interior. Jack McQuillan was sitting on the wooden shelf which, when a mattress and quilt were spread on it, formed his bed. His form was drooped and he was holding his head between his hands in a state of extreme dejection. As the priest and the keeper halted

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before his cell the convicted prisoner raised his pallid face and stared stupidly at them.

"Here's the Soggarth Aroon come to see you, Jack," said the keeper.

"Who's he?" asked the convict. "One of them gospel sharps wot's been a-comin' an' tryin' ter convert me? I don't want any of dem psalm-singin' crew."

"My good man," interposed the priest, stepping forward and speaking through the bars, "I do not come here to convert you. If I understand rightly you have already been baptized in our holy religion and are a communicant of the true church. I come to you not as a clergyman but as a friend to utter words of comfort and to cheer you, to ask you not to let the weight of your sentence overwhelm you, but to remember while there is life there is hope."

"If dat's der kind of talk yer goin' ter give me, it's all right. It's what I've been hungerin' an' thirstin' fer ever since they clapped me in here. But I won't stand for any pious guff. Me religion's me own. I was taught it by me poor mudder 'fore she died, when I used to be kneelin' at her feet sayin' me prayers, an' I ain't forgot dem prayers yet. This

here tryin' ter pump religion inter me makes me sick."

By this time the keeper had unlocked the door of the cell, and the priest entered the small, bare compartment, which held a human being who was to have the life shocked out of him with the fatal electric current. The official was about to leave the two alone, but the Soggarth Aroon bade him stay.

"I am not going to administer the holy sacraments of our faith to him," he said. "I am, alas," he added with a profound sigh, "not permitted to do so; but until he is actually executed he has a right to confer with his friends as to such lawful measures as may be taken to avert his awful doom."

"Dat's it!" exclaimed the prisoner eagerly; "dat's wot I wants ter hear an' talk about. Dey had no right ter convict me of murder; I never wanted ter kill dat dago, an' I'll swear it wid me dyin' breath."

He sprang from his hard seat and began to pace agitatedly up and down the narrow cell.

"I don't want ter die," he continued. "I'm too young ter die an' I've got me sister Maggie ter look after. Poor goil! There was hard times enough for her. Fust me fadder died w'en I wasn't more'n

six years old an' Maggie was only two; then me mudder couldn't stand ther burden much. She took in washin' an' ironin', fer ter support herself an' us children, an' one day I found her lyin' dead on de floor beside de wash tub. De coroner said it was heart disease wot killed her, but dough I was only a boy den, I know'd better. It was work—work from mornin' ter night—dat, an' starvation, fadder——”

He broke off abruptly and wiped a tear from his eye with the back of his hands.

“Starvation!” repeated the Soggarth Aroon, shocked by this revelation.

“Dat an' nothin' else,” declared Jack. “She wud-dent trust herself ter eat a crust fer fear dat us children would go hungry. She'd tell us lies, fadder, 'bout gettin' somethin' ter eat at the houses of ther families wot she took out washin' fer, but I knowed better. I knowed dey were too pizen mean ter give her anythin' but just what dey said was comin' ter her fur de washin', an' dat was blamed little.”

“Poor woman!” murmured the priest. “Her pious lies have been forgiven her at the throne of grace.”

"After dey took mudder away an' buried her," continued the prisoner, who seemed to be anxious to tell his life story, "I sold papers fer a time so's ter keep Mag an' me from bein' sent ter de poor-house. Den Mr. Armytage—God bless him—got interested in me from buyin' his papers off me an' give me a job in der works. Dat's how I come ter be dere, fadder, an' as long as me old boss was alive dere never was no trouble. I wouldn't be here now if de old man hadn't died an' Mr. Chubb hadn't took charge, an' I'm t'inkin' if young Mr. Armytage were only home he'd do somethin' ter help me fer the sake of his dad's memory."

"I have heard of young Mr. Armytage," said the priest. "They say he has never interested himself in the printing press works since he arrived at his majority."

"Dat's where all de trouble comes from," interjected Jack McQuillan—"his not tendin' ter de business as he ought ter do, an' leavin' a man like old Chubb to boss things. If I could only see him an' tell him dat ter his face it mightn't do me no good, but I t'ink it'd stop dis strike an' give me pals a

chance ter go to work again an' earn a livin' for dere sufferin' families."

"It would not be a bad idea," musingly said the Soggarth Aroon, "if a man like Mr. Armytage could be brought face to face with one of his employees, who has been condemned to death for an act growing out of a strike in his own establishment; but Heaven only knows where he is at this moment."

"Excuse me, father," interrupted the keeper. "I read a long account in the paper this evening about Mr. Armytage being expected home to-night. His steam yacht should arrive about nine o'clock, and he is to go to his home on Fifth Avenue, where a reception is to be given him."

"It is a sign from Heaven!" exclaimed the good father. "Jack McQuillan, I will go for you to this Mr. Armytage. I will, if necessary, implore him on my knees to come to see you before you are taken to Sing Sing."

"Then he'll have to come mighty soon and with the proper credentials," declared the keeper, with a skeptical shrug of the shoulders. "Jack is booked for up the river with the first train in the morning;

I doubt if this fashionable gent will get up early enough to see him, even if he cares to come at all."

"Nevertheless, I will go and plead with him," earnestly said the Soggarth Aroon. "Heaven will inspire my tongue to give utterance to the words that will enable me to fulfill my mission."

"Oh, fadder, if yer would only go ter him an' bring him here I would pray ter Heaven ter shower blessin's on yer every hour of the short time I still have to live."

And that is why the Soggarth Aroon presented himself at the midnight hour before the revelers at the Armytage residence.

In his eagerness to put this plan into execution he forgot all about asking Jack McQuillan for his sister's address.

CHAPTER VIII

A PRODUCT OF POLITICS

CORLEARS HOOK has now been converted into one of the small parks so fittingly termed the lungs of the great city.

All day long the children of the surrounding tenement houses disport on the green grasses, play on the graveled walks, or take a surreptitious dive in the fountain in the summer, when the park policeman is not looking; later, when the shadows of evening fall, tired workmen and their even more wearied wives come to rest on the benches and to lave in the refreshing breezes that blow from the East River so close at hand. During the summer, also, on certain evenings of the week a band of musicians, paid for by the city, plays popular airs in the music-stand, and then Corlears Hook Park becomes a great outdoor concert hall, in which thousands of

fresh, young voices join in a mighty chorus of glad-some song, while in the shady nooks, not penetrated by the glare of the electric lights, youthful lovers lurk to exchange secret hugs and kisses.

It was not thus in the days when the incidents in this story took place. Where the green sward now smiles up to heaven, were darksome rookeries down to the very edge of the river, fit abodes for the vampires of the underworld who flitted only by night, concealing their crimes under the murky waters, often reached by simply raising a trap-door in the floor. Gin-mills abounded at every corner, sapping the vitality and draining the purses of the already physically weak and wretchedly poor who lived in the dreary, filthy, unsanitary quarters of the neighborhood. Instead of the merry laughter of sunny-faced children heard nowadays, there came but the sobs and cries of some hapless child being beaten by a drunken parent, or the shrieks for help of some unfortunate wife in the clutches of a rum-crazed husband. As a rule, the respectable poor did not dare venture out of the house at night. The poorly lighted streets, and especially the river front, were given up to gangs of thugs and ruffians who

robbed and assaulted passersby, often merely for the price of a can of beer.

These gangs, the principal one of which was known as "the Jacksonians," from the nearby Jackson Street, plied their nefarious trade with almost absolute immunity from interference by the police, on account of the political power they possessed in the district. This power consisted mainly of packing the primaries, while on election day the gang was in its glory. They served as district captains and inspectors of election, and woe to the unlucky wight, in those days of voting bunches of ballots, who tried to enter the polling place with the wrong bunch in his hand. He was slugged and mauled, his eyes were blackened, and he could deem himself fortunate if he escaped with his life. And all this was done under the eyes of the police, for it, too, was a part of "the machine."

The leader of "the Jacksonians" was a burly ruffian named Mike Dempsey, more familiarly known as "Big Mike" on account of his size and the absolute sway he exercised over his fellows. He had "done time" up the river for breaking a man's jaw on election day. But he had been arrested, tried,

convicted and sentenced during one of the temporary spasms of political reform which occasionally seize the city.

Now "the machine" was on top again; Mike's term in prison was cut short "on account of good behavior," and he was back in his native haunt, once more the leader of his gang and "in cahoots," as he expressed it, with the Alderman of the district.

He boasted of his big political pull and used it, not only to line his pockets and secure immunity for himself, but also to further his love affairs.

He was the mysterious "he" that Maggie McQuillan had referred to in a manner so puzzling to the good Soggarth Aroon, and it was to meet him that she had so precipitously rushed out of the courtroom.

Both she and Jack were denizens of Corlears Hook. Not only were the Armytage Printing Press Works in the immediate vicinity, but they had lived in the neighborhood ever since their father died and their mother had taken in washing for a living. Reared in such an environment, is it a wonder that Jack McQuillan should have grown to manhood un-

couth and ignorant even if well meaning at heart, and that Maggie, who was of more than ordinary beauty of a common type, should have been exposed to the wiles of such a creature as "Big Mike" Dempsey?

She may have had a sneaking fondness for him on her part, for the leader of "the Jacksonians" was something of a hero in the eyes of the feminine portion of that part of the East Side. He was the big man of the district, and his political "pull" was considered infallible. Besides, he was a giant in strength and Maggie but a puny thing, who looked up to him with awesome admiration of his broad chest, thick-set neck and brawny muscles. He was fairly good-looking, too, as such men go, with dark, curly hair, blue eyes, and the regulation politician's moustache, kept in trim and dyed black.

She held out against his boisterous wooing until her brother got into his trouble, and then she sought the aid of his "pull," paying the price he demanded.

And now the world had crashed in ruin about her! Her brother condemned to death; the boasted "pull" a broken reed; her lover had lied to her; her terrible sacrifice had been in vain! More like a distracted

animal, with a death wound in its heart, than a human being, she ran through the streets, heedless of the curious glances cast at her bare head, from which her shawl had fallen, until she reached a liquor store at the corner of the street in which she lived, and which she knew was the quarters of "The Jacksonians," and where its leader could generally be found.

She gave one look behind the green screen which stood just inside the open doorway and saw him standing at the bar drinking the vile stuff dispensed there. She darted in and grabbed him by the shoulders.

"It's all up with Jack!" she gasped hysterically. "He's ter be 'lectrocuted."

"You don't say so, Mag?" declared Mike Dempsey in well-simulated surprise, for one of his henchmen who had been in court had brought him the news some time ago. "Well, I'm sorry fer poor Jack."

"Yer lie, yer ain't!" cried the distracted girl. "Yer lyin' now, as yer lied ter me about yer pull wid ther judge."

"Come, come, Mag, yer excited an' yer don't know

what yer sayin'," retorted the thug, with a shade of annoyance on his face. "Dis ain't der time nor de place ter bully-rag me—let's go outside an' we'll talk dis t'ing over."

He went out on the sidewalk, whither she followed him.

"Yer see, Mag," he tried to explain, "I never t'ought der case would come up 'fore der Recorder. Gee! he's one of dem stiff blokes wot no feller can git around. Yer see, he's been put on ther bench by dem blasted Reformers, so we'se, who works fer der Organization, don't get no show wid him."

"But you told me—you promised me——" she began in a tear-choked voice, and trembling in every limb.

"Yer needn't go puttin' it up ter a feller like dat," he interrupted in an injured tone. "I did me best. I went ter see me frien' der Alderman, an' he promised ter speak to a certain judge. It's just Jack's luck dat he come up 'fore der Recorder 'stead of dis judge, who'd let him off wid a light sentence. But cheer up, me goil; der woist ain't happened yet."

"He's ter be sent ter Sing Sing ter-morrer," she

moaned, bursting into tears. "Oh, Jack! Jack! I'll never see yer alive again!"

"Well, bein' in Sing Sing ain't bein' put in der chair yet, is it? Dey kin appeal, can't dey? An' mebbe he'll get a new trial. Meanwhile he's gettin' his grub an' lodgin' from der State, which is more'n you're gettin'. Now dat Jack can't provide for yer, I'll take care of yer," he grandiloquently added, putting his arm around her waist. "You just come wid me, an'——"

"Never!" she wildly interrupted, pushing him back. "God'll take care o' me, and He knows I bitterly rue der day I cast me eyes on yer."

"So dat's der way der wind blows, is it?" he cried, with a sudden access of jealous fury. "Yer a-goin' ter chuck me over. P'raps yer got yer peepers fixed on some other feller? Not on yer life! Yer belongs ter me, Mag, an' yer goin' home wid me right now."

He stretched out his brawny hand and caught her arm, which he could have crushed like a pipe-stem. She tried in vain to free herself from his grip.

"Let me go, Mike Dempsey!" she cried. "I don't want ter go wid yer."

"But I guess you will, me lady," he retorted, dragging her along the now darkening and deserted street.

Maggie gave a desperate shriek for help.

"Let go that girl, you ruffian!" exclaimed a female voice, and a young girl, not much older than Maggie herself, appeared on the scene. She was considerably taller though, almost as tall as Mike Dempsey himself, and she proudly bore her form, neatly clad in black, as she gazed steadfastly in the eyes of the thug, without a particle of fear on her pale, oval face. There was determination in her pose and in the flash of her clear, blue eyes. Mike Dempsey gave her one look and seemed to recognize her.

"Oh, ho!" he cried, with a burst of ironical laughter; "you're de gal wot hangs 'round here tryin' ter make people good; de gal dey calls der angel of ther slums. Well, yer better make yerself scarce, or dere'll be an angel less in dis wicked woild."

"Oh, miss, save me, save me from him!" cried Maggie, breaking loose from his grasp, and running to her side.

"I will, dear," coolly replied the girl, patting her head. "You will come with me, not with him."

"Oh, she will, eh?" sneered Mike; "an' wot's ter prevent me from grabbin' up ther two of yer?"

"This," replied the angel of the slums, suddenly drawing a revolver and pointing it at him. "If I'm an angel, I'm an armed one. You come a step nearer, and I'll show you how I shoot!"

CHAPTER IX

AN ANGEL OF THE SLUMS

AGNES MERRIHEW, the girl who pointed the revolver, with unerring aim, at the breast of the political thug, was indeed known in the neighborhood as "the angel of the slums." Some of the clergy, with a pious play on her name, called her "*Agnus Dei*, Lamb of God."

She was only ten years old when she came from the Far West to the big city with her father, but like him she brought with her some of the breezy atmosphere of the Colorado canyons. He had prospected with pick and shovel, year in and year out, until the name of Si Merrihew had become synonymous with bad luck. He had seen his young wife succumb to their sufferings and sink into an early grave, and he had taken his motherless child, scarcely a few months old, in his arms, determining to

battle on and on with adverse fortune. Then, when the girl was ten years old, her father, working in the most unpromising claim, turned a boulder with his pick and uncovered a vein of gold which promised to make him the richest miner in the Golden West. All he said, as he laid down his pick and reverently uncovered his head, was: "Why couldn't Mary have lived to see this day?"

As successive disappointments and failures had not broken down his indomitable spirit, so unexpected fortune did not unduly elate him. He made good his claim, broke up his primitive camp in the wilderness, and, taking with him some nuggets and pieces of ore he had dug from his mine, went with Agnes to Denver.

"Now my little gal shall be a lady," he told some of his mining friends. "I'm goin' to New York to form a company to work the mine, an' she shall have the best eddication that money'll buy."

He was as good as his word. The sale of his nuggets brought him a couple of thousand dollars, most of which he spent buying Agnes the most wonderful outfit a girl of her age ever had; with the balance

he bought the tickets for the train that was to take them to the metropolis.

Brought up under the circumstances as narrated, Agnes was skilled in all the peculiar accomplishments of the wild West.

Astride of an unbroken bronco, without saddle or bridle, she was a fearless rider; her aim was unerring at a hundred yards with either rifle or revolver; young as she was she had come out victorious in a combat with a mountain lion, and had laid the huge, ferocious beast at her feet a corpse, weltering in the blood oozing from its death wound in its heart, where she had stabbed it with her hunting knife.

Agnes Merrihew could do all this when she was ten years old, although she was a very indifferent reader and speller; fractions were to her so many stumbling-blocks, and she was in blissful ignorance of the rules of syntax. But this was all to be corrected now; she was to be brought up as a lady, as her father said.

When he arrived in the city and went down to Wall Street, he found promoters enough to finance his mine, but he had to take for his interest but a

relatively small proportion of its capitalization. It was capitalized at a million or more, but his share was barely a quarter of that amount. Still, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars seemed a tremendous amount of money to the simple miner, who thought that with it he could buy out almost all New York. What he did not consider, to his subsequent sorrow and dismay, was that taking stock in a corporation—and minority stock at that—was not exactly the same thing as receiving the same amount in hard cash. He sold enough of his shares to buy a little home on the upper West Side, the principal attraction of which, in his eyes, was that it was near enough to the young ladies' school in which he placed his daughter for her to come home every day.

It was mere chance that this very school was the same which Gladys Armytage and Alicia Chubb attended, although the two were somewhat older than Agnes and much further advanced in their studies. Agnes admired them shyly from a distance as ideals of what her father wanted her to become, though she said to herself that she would rather be like Gladys than Alicia, as the latter al-

ways looked at her with an air of disdain, while Gladys would sometimes give her a pleasant word or a friendly smile; and as the years went by, their intimacy became greater.

Agnes studied hard and not only mastered the rudiments in which she had been so woefully deficient, but also the higher branches of learning. To help her father in their happy, if modest, home, she became an expert typewriter and stenographer, accomplishments which in the after, sorrowful days she found of more immediate value to her than her knowledge of the modern languages and higher mathematics. When she was fifteen years old, the soaring, untrammelled imagination she had brought with her from her Western home burst forth into poesy. She began to write verses, at first secretly, and half ashamed to read them to herself. Then she showed some of the things she had written to her father, who declared they were the grandest outbursts of genius he had ever seen; finally she sent them to a magazine, and was in a perfect whirlwind of bliss when she actually saw them in print. What did she sing about in meter that seemed to come faultlessly from her pen? The hills and vales of her



native Colorado; the deep canyons where the shadows ever rested; the mountain torrents dashing in mad fury down the rocky gorges; the snow-capped mountains rising grand and serene through the clouds to the eternal sunshine that bathed their brows. All this she depicted in glowing verse, and ever through the stanzas there breathed that mighty spirit of liberty typified by the all-conquering cyclones of the West, which the shackling hand of weak human beings cannot stay.

At this time her muse sang in one key—that of freedom. It had not yet been attuned, as it was to be, to the throbbing notes of love or the sad minor chords of the sufferings of the poor and lowly. Thus the days and weeks, months and years sped by, until the sweet singer was eighteen years old. Then her girlish happiness, with the suddenness of an earthquake, fell into a crashing ruin, which, for the time being, broke all the strings of her lyre and rendered mute the song-birds in her heart.

It was the old, old game played in Wall Street, then known by a different name, but now called “Frenzied Finance” and “The System”—the game in which a solvent and prosperous corporation is

temporarily wrecked by the coterie of scoundrels who control it, for the purpose of what is known as "freezing out" the minority shareholders. The Colorado mine had not only proved lucrative, but the gains had exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those who had financed it. But these greedy gentlemen were not satisfied to receive the lion's share of the yearly production of gold; they wanted it all, and by Wall Street trickery and legal chicanery they accomplished their nefarious purpose.

Rumors began to circulate of exhausted veins, of flooded shafts and subterranean conflagrations in the mines, and the price of the shares in the market began to tumble slowly at first, then by leaps, as the bear clique manipulated them. Then the rate of the dividend was cut, followed by another tumble. Then dividends were passed altogether, and no one would touch the shares if they were offered to him free. Debts were purposely left unpaid; the mining corporation was thrown into bankruptcy and a receiver appointed—and all this while Si Merrihew held on to his shares with the fatuous confidence that it was but a passing storm. He knew of such happenings out in Colorado, where mines had seem-



ingly petered out, only to afterwards become more than ever productive and to reward a thousand-fold the faithful ones who had loyally preserved their interest. The Western miner may have known his Colorado, but he did not know Wall Street. The receiver, a mere tool of the sharpers, appointed by a "friendly" judge, reported that a reorganization of the company would be in the best interests of its stockholders; and it was, as far as the holders of the majority number of shares were concerned. These numbered scarcely more than half a dozen persons, who had quietly absorbed the stock as it was sacrificed in the declining market. The reorganization was ordered, executed in due legal form, and the minority shareholders found themselves cut off from all participation in the profits of the company, their shares being but bits of green paper with absolutely no value except in the junk shop.

This "hocus-pocus" of Wall Street simply bewildered the Colorado miner, who had been obliged to mortgage his little home to tide him over the days when his shares brought in no income to provide for his household expenses. But his great big heart broke when, the reorganization barely effected,

the shares boomed toward higher prices than they had ever been quoted, and enormous dividends were declared by the same old gang of directors who had played the game of freeze-out. He, the discoverer of the mine—the one man in all the world who had made it possible for these financial pirates to thus enrich themselves beyond the dreams of avarice—he had been betrayed and deceived; he had been ruined, made practically penniless; his daughter's career spoiled; her future blasted, and the very roof which sheltered him likely to be taken away by default of the very next interest on the mortgage, which he would be unable to meet. They said it was a sudden stroke of apoplexy which took him off, but he was assassinated by Wall Street, just as surely as if any one of the precious coterie of sharpers had thrust a knife to the hilt in his breast.

Agnes found him, on her return from school, sitting in his chair by the window. She thought him dozing while awaiting her coming, and playfully tip-toed behind him and bent her head to awaken him with a kiss. Her warm lips touched his icy ones, and then she knew he was dead.

Illness mercifully drew a curtain over the next

four weeks. At the end of that time Agnes awoke from the delirium of fever to find herself in a hospital, an orphan, fatherless now as well as motherless, bereft of a home, and without a penny in her pocket. She had no thought but to pray for death to come and lay her at her father's side. While in this state of utter moral and mental, if not physical, annihilation, she was visited by a godly man, the editor of a religious magazine to whose columns she had contributed. The friendly grasp of his hand was like balm to her wounded soul; his words of admonition fell like a shower of manna on her desolate heart. He told her that it was her duty to live for others if not for herself. His magazine had been instrumental in establishing a rescue home for young girls in Water Street, and they needed one who had known sorrow herself to go out in the highways and byways and gather in those of her sex who were tottering on the brink of ruin. Hers was not the only bleeding heart, and she would find that as she bound up the wounds of others, her own would be healed.

And Agnes accepted the mission thus offered her. Nay, she was eager to grow well and strong again,

so that she might minister to those who needed her aid. That was two years ago. She had given herself up to her holy work with such purpose and success that she was revered and adored even by the vilest on her daily visits in the lowest and most wretched quarter of the city.

Thus had she gained the titles of the "angel of the slums" and the "Lamb of God," and it was while on an errand of mercy that she had been attracted by Maggie's cry for help and had come to her rescue. Many a time had her Western breeding and her fearlessness been of good service to her in her work, but never more so than now, when she pointed her revolver at "Big Mike" and calmly told him she knew how to shoot.

CHAPTER X

A MODEL RESCUE HOME

BIG MIKE" made a motion as if to draw his own weapon, but then changed his mind and left his revolver in his hip pocket.

"Yer needn't be so perky 'bout pullin' yer gun," he sullenly said, "though I did hear as how yer were not only a gospel-sharp but a dead-shot, too. Yer ain't got no call, though, ter interfere between me and me gal here."

"That is for her to say—not you," retorted Agnes, lowering her weapon. "I heard her call for help, and that is enough warrant for my interference, especially with a person of such notorious character as I know you, Mike Dempsey, to be."

"Oh, then you know me pursonly?" he said with a look of surprise.

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"I know pretty nearly everybody around this neighborhood," calmly replied Agnes.

"Me too?" asked Maggie, moving closer to her.

"Yes, you, too," she answered, putting her arm around the young girl's waist. "You are the sister of the man who was condemned to death to-day, and, feeling that your heart would be sore and bleeding, I came on purpose to hunt you up and console you."

"You are indeed an angel!" cried Maggie with a fresh burst of tears. "But wot consolation can yer give me, homeless and penniless as I am, wid no brother now to care for me an' protect me?"

"The consolation of a sister's love," murmured Agnes as she drew Maggie to her breast and fondly kissed her. "I, too, have gone through the shadow of the valley of death and desolation. I know what it is to suffer and yet be strong. As for you, Mike Dempsey," she added, turning to the thug standing there and scowling at them, "you make yourself scarce."

"You ain't got no right to come between me and me sweetheart," he blustered. "If Mag wants a home, I'll give her one; if she wants money to blow

on clothes, I've got ther dough, all right. Won't you come wid me, Mag?"

"No, no," shudderingly replied the young girl, clinging more closely still to her fair protector. "Yer deceived me once, an' I'll never trust yer agin. You an' I parts now forever."

"Oh, yer kin talk mighty big," he sneered, "'cause yer t'ink yer've got der angel on yer side an' yer looks on me as a sort of devil. But ther devil sometimes gets ther best of ther game. Go with dat gospel-sharp if yer wants ter, but look out fer me. Yer not done wid me yet—not by a long shot. Yer belongs ter me—yer know best why—an' I'll have yer yet, me fine lady, as sure's me name's Big Mike."

So saying, he shook his big fist at the two girls, slunk away, and was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

"Do yer t'ink he means wot he says?" asked Maggie with a shiver when they were alone.

"Yes, I think he does," admitted Agnes. "But don't be afraid. From this moment on you will have friends to protect you."

"Oh, yer don't know how powerful he is in the

district—what a pull he's got; even the cops are afraid ter pinch him."

"We'll take proper measures to protect you," Agnes assured her; "but it would be too dangerous, now that your brother is not near to guard you, for you to live alone in your home."

"Alas, Miss!" sobbed Maggie, "I ain't got no home any more. It's three months now since Jack's been lyin' in ther Tombs, an' wot little clothin' I had, I had to hock ter get somethin' ter eat. This mornin' ther landlady put me out of ther house 'cause we owed her two months' rent, an' she said that she'd keep ther furniture for ther money that was comin' ter her."

"No matter, my dear, you shall come to the home with me. You have heard of the rescue home for young girls in Water Street, haven't you?"

"Yes; it's a mission, ain't it, where you've got ter 'tend prayer-meetin' all day? Dey say it's a Protestant mission, an' I'm a Catholic an'——"

Agnes interrupted her with a merry laugh.

"Poor girl!" she then exclaimed. "How misinformed you are! It is true that the home was founded by pious Protestants, and religious consola-

tion and instructions are given to those voluntarily asking for them; but Mr. Messenger, the editor of the paper with which I am connected and who has charge of the home, has determined to have it just what it is named—a rescue home, not a mission—and its doors are open to all young girls who need protection and friends, without regard to their religious beliefs. I live there myself,” she added, “and rarely attend the prayer-meetings. I have an opinion of my own that he is the most religious who does the most for his fellow-man, and Mr. Messenger never tries to combat my views. I have a lovely room, small but cozy, and furnished comfortably if plainly. My bed is large enough for two, and we’ll room together and you shall be my chum. How do you like that?”

“Oh, you are so good to me!” cried Maggie with tears in her eyes, while she raised Agnes’ hand to her lips. “But how can you trust me to share your room and even your bed when I am but a stranger to you?”

“I trust every one,” replied Agnes seriously; “that is part of my religion. If they afterwards do go wrong, their loss is greater than mine. But come,”

she added more lightly; "let us hurry, or we'll miss our supper."

Maggie gladly went with her. Hand in hand the two girls, like two sisters, wended their way through the dark and devious streets and paused before an unpretentious-looking three-story and basement brick house, which had first been a private residence in the days when that section of the city had been the home of wealth and fashion; then, when residence after residence was torn down to make huge warehouses, it had become a low and vile dance-house, until it was converted and consecrated to its present beneficent purpose by Rev. John Messenger.

Perhaps because the Rev. Mr. Messenger had never filled a regular pulpit in a church of his denomination, but had been a writer for the papers and an editor since leaving college, he laid down rather peculiar rules for the government of the home. It was, practically, to be nothing more than a free boarding-house for girls unable to pay for the accommodations offered them. The compulsory things were a bath, three substantial if plain meals a day, and a dormitory where sleep was wooed in cots covered with immaculate bed linen. Next in

importance in Mr. Messenger's eyes were a library containing good fiction; a class-room where Agnes taught reading, writing and spelling in the lower grades, and arithmetic, stenography and typewriting to the more advanced scholars; a sewing-room, presided over by a motherly woman who called the flock of girls her children; and a labor bureau in charge of Mr. Messenger himself, where applications were received for situations. On two points, in spite of murmurs of dissent on the part of some of the pious contributors to the home, the doctor was adamant: first, that neither officials nor the inmates were to wear any distinctive uniforms which would make them recognizable as being connected with the institution; and secondly, no religious exercises of any kind were to be given, except a simple service of prayer and song for those who cared to attend, without any compulsion, direct or indirect. Under its roof it sheltered nearly fifty girls, the limit of its narrow capacity, and there were almost as many different religious beliefs represented as there were inmates. On Sundays and holy days the girls went each to the church of her own faith, and meanwhile

lived in peace and amity with their sister-wards, no matter what they believed or disbelieved.

Alas, the home is no more! Its religious freedom was the very rock on which it split, in spite of the sanguine expectations of its founder that it would be the keystone of its perpetuity. The pious contributors, headed, sad to relate, by Mr. Silas Chubb, protested that it was sinful for them to contribute to a purely secular institution, and, their protests being unheeded, they ceased to pay the amounts necessary for its maintenance, preferring to devote the money to an uptown institution which had a grand-looking building surrounded by a magnificent park. There all the male officials were clergymen in surplice and cassock; the female attendants wore such lovely uniforms of a Protestant sisterhood, and every inmate had to wear an alpaca dress, gingham apron, and muslin cap, and was obliged to attend prayer-meeting three times every week day and five times on Sunday, besides saying grace before and after each meal. But during the time the Water Street home existed it probably did more good and exercised a more wholesome influence in the neighborhood than any effort made before and since to

spread the light of righteous living in that dark-some region.

It required neither ring of the bell nor a pass-key for Agnes to open the front door; the latch-string hung, so to speak, always on the outside. Timidly followed by Maggie, she entered the well lit hall and passed into an anteroom through a door, on the ground-glass panel of which was marked the word "Office."

The floor was covered with green baize carpet; a couple of cane-bottomed chairs stood handy; a few cheap pictures of landscapes hung on the wall, while behind a table-desk, littered with books and papers, sat a heavily-bearded, genial-appearing man, with a scholar's stoop and a kindly look beaming in his blue eyes from behind the large spectacles he wore. There was nothing in the room to indicate "an institution," secular or religious. It looked just like what it was intended to be—the business-office of a busy man. Nor did Mr. Messenger's attire, as he stopped writing at their entrance and rose to greet them, suggest the clergyman that he was by right of his learning, his college diploma and his inborn, true piety. He might have been a doctor, or

a lawyer, or the editor he really was, so far as the clothes he wore indicated.

"Ah," he said with a genial smile, as he stepped from behind his desk and approached Agnes with outstretched hand, "my *Agnus Dei* has brought another stray lamb to the fold, I see. We must make her feel at home here. You are welcome, Miss," he added, taking Maggie's hand, timidly held out, and giving it a cordial clasp, which made the young girl feel, as she afterward expressed it, "like I'd a-knowned him all me life and him the same ter me."

"She should be made doubly welcome," said Agnes, "because she is the sister of the man whose doom you must have read about in the evening papers, and, besides, she has a lover who is a low villain. I have just rescued her from his clutches."

"She shall be doubly welcomed," declared Mr. Messenger. "Yes, trebly, because she deserves an extra welcome on your account. I'll just enter her name on the register now, Agnes, and you get her ready for a good supper. We'll listen to her story after she has fortified herself with a square meal."

After this short, practical homily, he took the

name and what few particulars were necessary to complete the record, and then bowed the two girls out of the office.

Agnes took her charge to the bath-room, gave the girl courage by also taking a shower-bath, then had her attired in a simple dress brought by the housemaid, and introduced her to some of the other inmates, who were indulging in the bath.

"I feel like a new woman," confessed Maggie as Agnes led her to the dining-room. "I ain't never had no real wash since I was born. Dere ain't no bath-rooms in de tenement houses we lived in."

She felt more than ever like another person after she had partaken of the supper, which consisted of cold meats, some preserves, toast and tea.

"It's more'n I've dared ter eat," she declared, "since I began hocking me clothes."

After the supper, Agnes entertained her in the library by reading the newspaper aloud, carefully avoiding any article referring to her unfortunate brother. Then the angel—here as well as in the slums—played on the piano which stood in one corner of the library, for the benefit of all the inmates, and sang in a pure if not powerful voice some popu-

lar airs, in the choruses of which all the girls could join. It was as pleasant and agreeable a way of spending an evening as you could find in any home where there are grown-up daughters, and where a spirit of harmony and contentment reigns.

Then came bed-time, and when Maggie was ensconced in the snow-white sheets, and, in her delight, actually hugged her bed companion, she could not help exclaiming:

"I never t'ought when I heard Jack sentenced dis afternoon dat I could ever be happy again. An' now me heart is as light as a feather."

Would it have been so light, or would Agnes have felt so sure of her charge's safety, if the two girls had known that their footsteps had been dogged to the home?

Unknown to them, "Big Mike" had been on their track, and when he saw them disappear into the building he shook his clenched fist after them and fairly hissed:

"So dis is where you are housed, me lady love? It'll not take me long ter git yer out of dere an' put yer where all de angels in de woild an' in heaven can't git yer out."

CHAPTER XI

FACE TO FACE

THE entrance of the Soggarth Aroon caused an impressive silence to fall on the revellers at the Armytage residence. The Prophet Daniel had indeed appeared, and he was to solve the riddle which perplexed Harold why there were want and misery, crime and sin, in the midst of plenty beyond any one's hope of rational enjoyment.

"Good father," exclaimed the young heir, rising and reverently saluting the priest, "before you tell us the particular mission which brings you here to-night, tell me, I beg you, what is my duty to my fellowman. The conversation had tended that way just before you entered, and I confess I am not satisfied with any of the solutions of this great problem which were offered here. Your piety, your self-abnegation, your services in behalf of the poor

and lonely, the wretched and miserable, are known all over the world. In London and Paris, in Rome itself—the fountain-head of your faith—I heard the name of the Soggarth Aroon mentioned with reverent praise. As a child to the knees of his father, so I come to you to ask what should a man with my education, my wealth, and my prospects, do to make the world a little better because I have lived in it.”

The silence was painfully intense as all eyes were turned on the priest to await his reply. While Harold was speaking the good father had stood in an attitude of devotion, his hands clasped in front, his eyes half closed and lowered to the floor, while his lips kept moving as if he were murmuring a prayer. Now he suddenly raised his head, his countenance became irradiated with a holy glow, and his eyes shone as their glance swept the entire assemblage and finally rested on Harold's face. Tall as he was naturally, his figure seemed to increase in size until it dominated all in the room.

“Remember that ye are all children of the same Father,” he exclaimed in resonant tones, which vibrated in the hearts of all who heard him. “Re-

member that ye all live in the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God; then will it be borne in unto each of you what duty you have to perform even unto the lowliest of your brothers."

He paused a moment as if to let this exordium sink into their minds, then in a milder tone continued:

"Some other time, Mr. Armytage, and on some more fitting opportunity, I will, with your permission, point out to you how you can live your life in sweet harmony with this dictum I have laid down. To-night I am but a messenger from a poor, wretched fellow-creature, humbly begging your intercession in his behalf."

"You come from the man who this day has been condemned to death by our Recorder here? I would like to hear his story from his own lips; how he came to commit the awful crime of murder."

"That is what he has begged me to ask of you," declared the Soggarth Aroon. "Oh, do not let me return to him to still further wring his overcharged heart with the cruel tidings that my mission has been in vain."

"It has not been in vain," exclaimed Harold, the

light of a holy purpose shining in his eyes. "If my visit to him in his cell in the Tombs will afford him any consolation, go to him, good father, and tell him that I will be there to-morrow."

A murmur of dissent arose from the aristocratic company. They thought it impudent on the part of the unfrocked priest to ask a man of Harold Armytage's position in society to visit in his cell a condemned murderer, and especially one of the laboring classes. They regarded Harold's ready assent as quixotism which they deemed inspired by the wine he had drunk at the banquet. Two there were who did not share this feeling. A brighter light came into Gladys' eyes, and her head crested itself more proudly as she glanced fondly at her brother and murmured:

"Good, Harold!"

The Recorder was the other one who considered Harold's declaration as entirely in order.

"There can be no objection from a legal standpoint," he said, "to your seeing the prisoner and offering him such consolation as may lie in your power. Only, you will be unable to see him at the

Tombs to-morrow. He will be on his way to Sing Sing long before you are out of bed."

"Then, by God!" said Harold firmly, "I shall see him to-night, if there is any possibility of doing so."

"Alas!" declared the Soggarth Aroon, "the prison rules are strict; no visitor would be admitted at this hour."

"They would if I issued a written request in my judicial capacity," declared the Recorder. "If Mr. Armytage is willing to return with you to the Tombs I will give him a note to the keeper which will admit him to the prison and procure for him an interview with the prisoner. I feel that I have done my duty in sentencing Jack McQuillan to death; still, I am curious to learn what he would have to say to his former employer——"

"I am not aware that he was in my employ," broke in Harold.

"As co-owner with your sister of the Armytage Printing Press Works," explained the Recorder, "you were his employer, even though the works were under the management of Mr. Chubb."

"Then he was my employee, too," interjected

Gladys. "I approve of Harold's intention, and if Your Honor will write the note, my brother will go to see the poor man this very night."

"*Ma foi!* but she is romantic," muttered the Marquis de Belle-Riviere under his mustache. "I did not think she had a heart under her glacial exterior. But it may be mere eccentricity. They say all fair Americans are eccentric." And he gave his shoulders a Parisian shrug.

"In going, father," asked Harold, "will I begin to put into practice one of your precepts about the brotherhood of man?"

"That you will, my son," declared the priest, extending his hands over the young man's head as if in benediction.

"Then go I shall. I will provide you with pen and paper, Your Honor," he added, turning to the Recorder; "please write the note while I change my dress and summon the coachman."

"Does this mean the breaking up of our festivities?" asked Silas Chubb, while Alicia looked glum at the thought that she was to be deprived of her predestined partner in the german which was to follow the dinner.

"By no means," replied Harold. "On with the dance, ladies and gentlemen; enjoy yourselves to your hearts' content. I even beg you to remain until my return; I may have an interesting story of my experience to tell you."

At his request a footman brought the necessary stationery to the Recorder, who wrote the following order, addressed to the warden of the Tombs :

"You are hereby directed on presentation of this order to pass into the prison the bearer, Harold Armytage, and the clergyman who accompanies him, and to afford them an opportunity to see and converse with the prisoner, Jack McQuillan. By order of the Recorder of the City of New York."

To this he signed his name and affixed his personal seal with the signet ring he wore.

It took Harold but a very few moments to change his evening dress for a walking suit; then receiving the note from the Recorder, he bade his friends good-night and with the Soggarth Aroon passed out of the room. In the hall he stopped to put on a fall overcoat and hat, and then, allowing the good father

to precede him, left the house. The two men entered the closed carriage which was already drawn up at the curb, and the driver, having his directions, started his horses at a smart pace downtown in the direction of the Tombs.

Harold and his priestly companion exchanged but few words during this strange midnight ride through the deserted business portion of the city. The former's thoughts were full of the new career which seemed to have been marked out for him by the Soggarth Aroon's brief admonition, while the latter seemed sunk in a sort of ecstatic reverie over what he considered the winning of a new soul to the cause of righteousness. They reached the grim, Egyptian structure in Centre Street, since replaced by a new and less forbidding-looking edifice, just as the hands of an illuminated clock in the front of an office building opposite pointed to the hour of one.

At that hour the sidewalk in front of the Tombs was absolutely deserted; not a pedestrian was in sight, nor a policeman on his beat. Dark, shadowy, mysterious in the faint light of a waning moon and partly clouded sky, the massive structure, the scene

of so many heart-breaking tragedies in real life, loomed up with its broad stone stoop and its heavy columns and façades, like some heathen temple reared in the sands of Egypt to the worship of Isis or Osiris. It was well named the Tombs, for it was the grave of many a wrecked soul, and no one could gaze on it, especially on such a night as this, without feeling a shiver pass through his frame.

On the Leonard Street side near Centre Street was a small iron grating which gave passage to the keeper's office on the ground floor. Near this grating on the inside a fat, good-natured door-keeper, not over-intelligent or quick-witted, but willing and obliging, sat dozing away the hours in a big, wooden arm-chair. He had been appointed to the job by some political friend, and it was deemed a sinecure, for his somnolence was rarely disturbed after night-fall. He was rudely awakened from his dreams of participating in a political chowder party by the grating being forcibly shaken. Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he demanded who was there.

"We want to get in," declared Harold.

"Yer can't—it's after hours ; so run away, sonny,"

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good-humoredly retorted the door-keeper, settling himself in his chair for another nap.

"Take this to the warden," said Harold, passing the Recorder's note through the iron bars of the grating, "and here's a dollar for you for your trouble."

The door-keeper was not too proud, as he termed it, to take small fees for any little favors of this kind. So he pocketed the money, and, rising from his chair, lumbered off in the dimly lighted hallway. He was gone for about ten minutes and then returned with one of the keepers, who held a big iron key in his hand.

"The boss says," announced the latter, "that if it's ther Recorder's orders, that you and the father are to come in. It's none of his funeral, though he's never heern afore 'bout visitors to ther prisoners at this hour of ther night."

With that he unlocked a massive lock with the key, pushed back several iron bolts, and opened a small door in the grating. Harold and the Soggarth Aroon passed into the prison and then the door was locked and bolted again.

The warden of the city jail, who was primarily

responsible for the safe-guarding of the prisoners, was seated at a high desk, in front of which was a brass guard-rail to keep applicants for admission at a proper distance. He was high up in city politics and had been that evening attending a meeting of leaders of his party called for the pleasing pastime of dividing up the patronage. The meeting had been a protracted one, for each leader wanted to secure the lion's share of the spoils of office for his own district, and he had returned to the jail only a few moments ago. He was holding in his hands the Recorder's note which he had just read.

"So you want to see Jack McQuillan," he said. "I s'pose it's all right 'cause the Recorder orders it, but it's the first time it's been done in the Tombs to my knowledge, an' I've had a job in this prison for the last twenty-five years."

"We know it is out of the regular order," said Harold, "but as the prisoner will be sent to Sing Sing——"

"He's booked for the 9 A. M. train," interrupted the keeper. "All right, you shall see him. Do you want to speak to him, too, father?" he asked, turning to the Soggarth Aroon, whom he well knew and respected.

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"I would like to say a few last consoling words before he is taken away," replied the priest.

"Here, Bill," said the warden, addressing his subordinate, "take the gent and the father to the counsel-room and bring the prisoner to them. They can talk to him for half an hour, then take the prisoner back to his cell and let the visitors out. I'm off to bed. I'm dead tired out."

With that he went to his own apartments, which, with his family, he occupied in the jail, while the keeper, unlocking the door that led to the corridors of the prison itself, escorted Harold and his companion to the large room known as the counsel-room, into which prisoners are taken for consultations with their lawyers. Here they were locked in while the keeper went to fetch the doomed man.

He was gone about fifteen minutes and then returned, bringing with him the much wondering prisoner, who had simply been told to get up and follow the official without being given any reason why. A moment later Jack McQuillan entered the counsel-room.

The wealthy employer and his death-doomed employee were face to face.

CHAPTER XII

THE ORIGIN OF THE STRIKE

FOR a moment the two gazed at each other in silence. In the faces of both there was a look of something like curiosity. Harold had noted the man's shuffling gait as he entered, his lowered head and general hang-dog appearance. He gazed at his rough, workingman's clothes, consisting of dark tweed trousers, checked muslin shirt, and a sack coat, his ungainly if Herculean form and the low grade of intelligence in his bristly, unshaven face. He surveyed him as one would look at a strange animal through the bars of its cage, and the thought occurred to him whether, if things were different, if he were not his father's son and the inheritor of that father's wealth, he, too, might not be as miserable an object as the man who stood before him, a victim of heredity and environment.

In Jack McQuillan's eyes the late boss's son was also, as already stated, an object of curiosity. He had never in his life mingled with any but his own work-a-day class, and this fine gentleman in a frock coat and shiny silk hat seemed to him almost like a vision from another world. Almost mechanically he raised his powerful, toil-calloused hands—those hands that had choked the life out of a fellow-creature—and compared them with the white, tapering fingers of the young aristocrat. Then, as if moved by an involuntary impulse, he blurted out :

"Say, boss, if you'd a-worked as hard fur a livin' as I did, yer hands wouldn't a-looked any whiter'n mine."

"Come, none of that!" interjected the keeper. "No insolence to the gentleman, or back to your cell you go!"

Harold raised his hand to interpose.

"Let the man talk," he said. "That is what I came here for—to listen to what he has to say for himself. And he is right; it is only an accident of birth and breeding which makes all the difference between us."

"It is not the externals which count," declared the

Soggarth Aroon; "I would not exchange the man with the grimy hands, but whose soul is white, for the fairest-handed millionaire who carries a black heart in his body."

At a sign from Harold the keeper left the counsel-room, locking the door behind him. It was not necessary for him to be present at the interview, as there was no apparent possibility of the escape of the prisoner.

"Now, my good fellow," said the young heir to the Armytage millions, "the first thing I want to do is to shake hands with you to prove that I, at least, am your friend."

He held out his hand and the other somewhat timidly placed his own in it. Harold gave him a cordial clasp and then continued:

"Now let me hear the whole story of your life, how you were brought up, how you came to be in my father's employ, and what induced you to commit the crime for which you were convicted. It is only if you freely and frankly tell me and the good father here all about yourself that I may be of some sort of assistance to you. What kind I do not yet know myself, but I assure you that I came here at

this hour of the night, leaving my sister and my friends at a festive gathering in my honor, for this very purpose."

"Yer very kind ter do so," said Jack, with a touch of feeling in his usual stolid manner. "Yer 'minds me of yer father—God rest his soul—who, too, had a kind heart an' a feelin' fer those who worked under him, though he wasn't as elegant a lookin' gent as you are, nor wor his hands so white."

Harold acknowledged this eulogy of his dead father with a sympathetic pressure of the other's hand, and then Jack began his story, giving an account of his boyhood days, and the sufferings his mother and sister had undergone, in much the same words as he had already told it to the Soggarth Aroon. Then he continued:

"So long's yer father lived we had no trouble at ther works. We were allus a union shop an' there never was no sich t'ing as a strike. It wuz a sorry day for us, boss, when he died an' you went off ter furrin parts, leavin' ther works ter be managed by Mr. Chubb."

"You think," asked Harold, in a serious tone, "that I neglected my duty in seeking pleasure abroad

instead of remaining at home and engaging actively in the business I had inherited?"

"'Scuse me fur sayin' so, boss," apologetically replied Jack, "but dat's wot dey all said at ther shop: 'Der young boss is off havin' a good time an' his workmen wot earns all der money he's a-spendin' kin go ter blazes for all he cares.' I ain't sayin' dat meself," he hastily added, "leastwise not now; but I'm givin' yer der general talk in ther shop seein' yer asked me ter."

"You need not apologize either for yourself or your fellow workmen," declared Harold. "The men were right. I was wanting in my duty, and it may be that this very act of remissness on my part is the remote cause, at least, of your being in this jail to-night. If so, I owe an apology to you and your fellows rather than you owe any to me."

Jack stared at him as if the young man was speaking in a strange language, and strangely indeed did such sentiments sound in his ears. In all his born days he had never heard an employer, not even Harold's father, give utterance to them.

"If it was wrong for you to be cruising about in your yacht," said the Soggarth Aroon, "you sinned,

if sin you did, through ignorance of what the two thousand men in your employ might demand of you as sentient, human beings, with hearts that throbbed and bodies that suffered, not mere pieces of inanimate machinery to grind out more gold for you. You were not wilfully negligent of their interests, as, alas! too many other employers are."

"I recognize that I erred in the darkness of ignorance," declared Harold, "but I am beginning to see at least a faint glimmer of light; I begin to understand one application of the fundamental truth you proclaimed at the banquet to-night, that we all live in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. I thank you, good father, for teaching me that lesson."

He grasped the priest's hand and shook it warmly, while a tear of holy joy glistened in the latter's eye.

"Ever since Mr. Chubb wuz der sole boss," continued Jack in his narrative, "he's been set on down-in' ther union. He couldn't very well make it an open shop, for yer father wuz a trades-unionist himself 'fore he became a boss an' wuz proud of ther union card he carried in his pocket as long's he

lived. But wot Mr. Chubb wuz after wuz ter force ther men ter strike so's he could tell yer it warn't his fault if he had ter go back on yer father's direction ter keep ther works allus straight an' fair 'cord-in' ter union rules."

"So then this strike with all its dire consequences was really due to Silas Chubb?" interjected Harold in surprise. "Can that be true?"

"It's der truth I'm givin' yer," solemnly assured Jack; "ther truth comin' from a man condemned ter death an' who doesn't want ter die wid a lie on his lips."

"I know of the strike," said the Soggarth Aroon, who was as deeply interested in the prisoner's story as Harold, "but not its cause. Tell us its cause."

"One of the men," replied Jack, "wuz hurt by a piece of machinery fallin' on him an' was laid up in ther hospital with a broken knee for a month. We all t'ought he wuz gettin' his wages regular while he wuz away, same's if he wuz workin'. Dat wuz der rule durin' yer father's time, Mr. Armytage, an' we knowed no different. Soon's Bill got out ther hospital he came limp-in' down on his crutch, an' de fust t'ing he told us wuz dat he hadn't got a

cent. Wall, we 'p'inted a committee to see Mr. Chubb about it, respeckful like, yer know, an' I wuz one of de committee. Mr. Chubb received us in his office all right an' gave us de glad hand; but w'en we stated our errand it wuz de marble heart we got. He wuz awfully sorry, he said, in dat silky, smooth style o' talkin' he has, but he didn't see his way clear ter pay Bill for work he hadn't done. He doubted, he said, wedder he had any right ter pay out de money. He wuz only de executor of de estate an' he would be breakin' de law if he paid it. We asked him if dat held good as to anybody wot got hurt in der shop, an' he says it did.

"Den we told him that der old boss, meanin' yer father, allus paid a man his wages when he wuz away sick, no matter wedder it was 'cause he got hurt or not. He said he wuz aware of dat, but dat sich payments were allus charged to Mr. Armytage's private charity account and dat der business itself had nothin' ter do wid it, an' dat no one could order sich payments 'ceptin' yourself, who wuz away, an' your sister, who wuz in college, 'sides not bein' yet of age. We asked him if he knew when you'd come

back, an' he said he hadn't de least idee, an' den he perlutely bowed us out of der office."

"It was indeed but a trick to exasperate the men," indignantly declared Harold. "He knew well enough that neither I nor my sister would ever object to such payments, and we are the only ones who would have a right to do so. I suppose the men were very angry when you reported the result of your mission?"

"Dey wuz hoppin' mad, sir; dey said it wuz an outrage in a works like dat where accidents were likely to happen every day, dough Bill's wuz der fust since yer father died. We wrote Mr. Chubb a letter sayin' dat he must agree to pay for lost time caused by an accident or we wud strike, and de committee wuz sent back to deliver der letter ter him pussonly. He read it, den coolly tore it up an' threw der fragments in der waste-basket. 'Very well, gentlemen,' he den sez to us, 'strike away. No such rule will be established in dese works. Even if I had wanted to do it, I wouldn't do it now. I allow no dictation from my employees. Good-mornin'—and der strike wuz on.'"

"Oh, that I had been communicated with!" ex-

claimed Harold. "All this would have been different. But the crime for which you were sentenced—how did that happen?"

"I'm comin' ter dat now," replied Jack. "We laid down our tools an' walked out dat same afternoon. Yer mightn't believe it, but I'm a-tellin' yer der truth, as we marched out one doorway of der works, a gang of scabs came marchin' in by anudder door. Dat wuz proof positive dat Mr. Chubb had been preparin' fur a strike fur a long time widout us knowin' a t'ing about it. If we wuz mad before, yer kin believe we wuz red-hot now, an' we swore dat we wud down der scabs wot wuz takin' der bread out o' our mouths."

"There's where you boys made a mistake. You had no right to indulge in any threats or violence," suggested Harold.

"I s'pose so," gloomily answered the prisoner. "An' dat's ther same wot der judge said ter me in court. But it's not in human natur' ter control yer feelin's when yer feel yer've been done dirt to. We had a scrimmage wid der scabs when dey came out dat evenin' an' licked 'em good till we were chased by der cops. So it went on der nex' day, an' der nex'

for two weeks. Den I spied a dago wot I had me eyes on for several days past, who wuz on me own job shovelin' sand in der castin' room. He wuz just goin' into ther foundry when I caught him 'roun' ther neck wid me two hands. I wuzn't goin' ter hurt him much; just lug him into ther middle of ther street an' let him drop. But dat dago gave one squawk an' died in me hands. Believe me, boss, I didn't mean ter kill him! I didn't know I had dat strength in me hands, but der judge said it made no difference wedder I meant ter kill him or not—it wuz murder in der fust degree, all der same."

"I presume," said Harold, "he referred to the law that intent to kill need not be shown when a homicide takes place during the commission of an unlawful act. From a legal standpoint you were justly convicted, and the death sentence is imposed by the statute."

"I ain't got much t'ought nor care 'bout meself," said Jack, wiping a furtive tear from his eyes. "I can meet me fate as bravely as any man. But it wuz my poor sister Maggie an' der men from der shop I wuz a-t'inkin' of when I begged the good

father to have yer come ter see me. Yer'll do something fer Mag, when I'm gone, won't yer? Poor gal! she fainted in ther courtroom when I wuz sentenced. An' get dis here strike settled. De men has got deir wives and children ter look after an' it's hard—very hard—fer dem ter stand up in der cause of justice and der union when dere's not a dollar in der house, an' der butcher an' der baker an' der landlord is a-callin' for wot's comin' to dem. You'll see Mr. Chubb, won't yer? You'll explain ter him dat you've no objection to payin' der men fer time lost by accidents in ther works, same's yer father did, an' dat yer want it ter be a union shop, same's yer father had? An' den he'll have no 'scuse but must call der men back again. If yer'll do dat, it'll be all I ask. I kin den go to der chair wid de t'ought dat my death, at least, has brought about some good."

While Jack was thus earnestly pleading for his sister and his shopmates, Harold stood immovable, listening to him intently with his eyes fixed on the floor. Now he suddenly raised his head and looked at the Soggarth Aroon.

"Father," he hurriedly said, "I wish to give the

prisoner an assurance which I would not care to have the jail official overhear. Will you please step to the grating at the door and give me notice if you see him coming?"

The good priest gave the young man a searching glance, and a ghost of a smile for an instant hovered around the corner of his lips. Then, without a word, he went to the door and stationed himself in front of the grating in such a manner that, while his broad form shut out a view from the outside of what was passing on within the room, he also could not see what was going on without turning around his head.

As soon as the priest's back was turned to them, Harold tip-toed to Jack's side, and, grasping him by the hand, leaned toward him until their heads fairly touched, and whispered in his ear:

"I will not only do all you ask me, but will also save your life!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE ESCAPE

JACK McQUILLAN gave a start as he heard these words, but the ejaculation which rose to his lips was stifled by Harold's hand.

"Hush!" the latter hurriedly whispered; "not a word; not a sound; I'm going to get you out of here right now. I'm going to take your place. They can't do much to me; I have committed no murder. Off with your jacket, and put on my vest and coat. The Prince Albert will go down below your knees, and if you keep it buttoned up in front it will, together with my high hat and overcoat, practically disguise you. Only keep your face well in the shade. Not suspecting an escape, they will not scrutinize you closely. Play your part well, and in five minutes you will be a free man."



"And you?" gurgled the prisoner, as Harold removed his hand from the other's mouth.

"I'll be Jack McQuillan for a little while and then we'll see what happens."

"But, sir——"

"No buts! I'm your boss, you know. Do as I command!"

Thus fairly ordered to make the change, Jack McQuillan quickly effected it, and, in the dim light which filtered into the counsel-room from the gas-jet in the corridor, it would have taken a very keen glance indeed to establish the identity of the two men.

"My carriage is at the door," whispered Harold, as he gave some finishing touches to the prisoner's disguise. "Get into it with the Soggarth, if you get safely out of the jail. The carriage will be driven to my home. Get out of it in some way before it reaches there, and you will be free. Only don't let the good father suspect your identity; his conscience would oblige him to prevent your escape."

Before Jack could mutter a reply, the priest announced that the keeper was approaching.

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"All right," said Harold, speaking in such a way that his voice seemed to come from where his temporary double was standing. "I've told McQuillan all I had to say. We are ready now to leave."

The official now came to the door, and, unlocking and opening it, said: "Don't you think it's 'bout time for this interview to end and the prisoner to be taken back to his cell?"

"I was just about to call you to let us out," declared Harold, inwardly thanking his stars that he was something of a ventriloquist and could send his voice in whatever direction he pleased. "I'm glad we came and had our talk with the prisoner. You will find him more tractable and he will follow you to his cell without a word."

"He'd better do so, if he knows what's good for him," grimly replied the keeper, displaying a long, heavy policeman's club. "I'll take youse gents out fust; ther prisoner kin stay here till I comes back."

So saying, he permitted the Soggarth Aroon, who little suspected that he was unwittingly assisting in an escape, to pass out of the counsel-room into the corridor, followed by Jack McQuillan, who carefully kept his face turned away from the priest and

the official. The latter securely locked his prisoner, as he supposed, in the room, and escorted the two men along the corridor, through the now completely deserted office, to where the door-keeper was guarding the outer gate.

"Let 'em out, Jim," he directed the latter. "It's ther swell gent an' ther priest who came here on the Recorder's order. It's all right."

Having no cause to believe otherwise, the door-keeper drew back the bolts, unlocked and opened the iron gate, and the next minute the prisoner was on the sidewalk, drinking in deep draughts of the free air of heaven. Thus easily did Jack McQuillan make his escape from the Tombs by a method successfully accomplished many times before this particular night, and many times since.

The Armytage carriage was standing at the curb, the driver dozing on his box while awaiting his master's return. Rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, he descended and held the door open for them to enter the vehicle. Then he closed it with a bang, got up on his seat, and, lashing the horses, started off at a rattling pace for the Fifth Avenue home. For a time the two men in the carriage made no

attempt to speak to each other. The good father had a habit of indulging in a reverie at almost every convenient opportunity; a reverie in which his mind wandered from the concrete object to the abstract generalization of which it could be made a lesson. He thought what an example Harold Armytage's conduct this night would be to employers in general if they could be made aware of it. How a kind word, an acknowledgment of the rights of the men serving under them, and their moral duties to their employees, would smooth the way to a better understanding between capital and labor; how many strikes and lock-outs would be thereby obviated; how much of misery and suffering, of hardship and crime which now existed in the world would be wiped out! In his mental ecstasy the good man erected a Utopia in which all employers were good and kind and forbearing, and all workingmen peaceful and active and industrious, each class working for the interests of the other, rather than for their own, and, in the end, finding they had mutually benefited themselves, morally, physically and financially. So radiant and glorious did this vision appear to the Soggarth Aroon, that he turned to

his companion to speak to him about it, but the latter appeared sunk in a heavy sleep.

Jack McQuillan had thought it best to feign a deep slumber as the easiest means of avoiding any premature discovery of his identity by the priest; but though he kept his eyes shut, his brain was busy—not on a proposition for a general amelioration of the condition of mankind, but intent on his own personal safety and how he, in turn, could be of assistance to the noble man who had sacrificed his own liberty to procure his escape.

“If I gets out o’ here widout bein’ spotted by the father,” he thought, “I’ll make a bee-line fur Jackson Street. I knows a man dere wot fixes up crooks so’s ther police can’t nab ’em. I ain’t a crook, dough dey tells me I’m a murderer, but dis man’ll help me all de same. I’ll have him fix me up as a darky; no one’ll be lookin’ fur me in a black man, an’ I kin stay ’round dese diggin’s, watch over poor Maggie an’ do a good turn, mebbe, fur de young boss—God bless him fur wot he’s done fur me ter-night!”

Thus his thoughts were running, but he kept his eyes tightly closed and his tall hat tilted over his

face, as the Soggarth turned toward him, while he breathed somewhat stertorously, like one in a sleep of utter exhaustion.

"He's dead asleep," muttered the priest, surveying the recumbent form but dimly outlined in the gloom of the interior of the carriage; "and no wonder, considering the strenuous life he has been leading since last evening. Returning to the city after a tour of the world, rushing home to be the guest of honor at a dinner, then hurrying to the Tombs to be of some benefit to a fellow man! He deserves his well-earned rest."

The good father lapsed into silence, and, because Jack's example was infectious, or that the father, too, had been leading a strenuous life, the fact is he began to feel drowsy himself.

"I was going to ask him to let me out at the corner near where I reside," he murmured with a yawn, "but I should hate to wake him up. Let him sleep until we reach his home, and then I will bid him good-night, or rather good-morning, for it must be after two o'clock now. Meanwhile, I'll take a little nap myself."

He settled himself in a comfortable position, and

soon his eyes closed in gentle sleep. Jack McQuillan heard the good priest's regular breathing, and, gazing at him out of the corner of his eye, noticed that the venerable man was sleeping the sleep of the innocent.

"Now's me time," he muttered, sitting up and pushing his hat up on his head. "Der father's dead to ther woild, an' here's where I makes me skip."

The carriage was going at a fairly rattling pace and he knew that the noise of the wheels on the stones of the street would drown any slight sounds he might make. Yet he observed the utmost precaution, not only to leave the sleeper undisturbed, but also to avoid attracting the attention of the coachman. So, silently as he could, he opened the carriage door a trifle, and held it so that it would not swing open altogether. Then he paused to listen. The sleeping priest made no motion; the coachman did not slacken the speed of the horses. So far, so good. He peered out into the street through the glass of the door. They were passing through an ultra-fashionable side street uptown, which crossed Fifth Avenue. Outside of the lighted lamp-posts at the corners, the street was shrouded in darkness,

not a gleam of light was to be seen in any of the windows of the big brown-stone mansions which lined either side, no pedestrian was in sight, no policeman was patrolling the sidewalk. Jack had never been in this neighborhood before, but he trusted to luck to find his way from this portion of the town, so deserted at night, to the more populous East Side. The carriage just then was in about the center of the block, farthest away from the lamp-lights, and, therefore, in its darkest portion.

"Here goes!" he muttered, opening the door a little farther. Then he slipped out of the vehicle, still holding on to the door, and placed his feet on the carriage steps. Here he remained for a minute or two, and then he softly reclosed the door. Some repairs were being made to a building, and in the street in front of it was a mound of sand. As the carriage reached that spot, Jack let go his hold and dropped on to the mound. The soft, yielding sand deadened the sound of the fall, and saved him from any injury he might have sustained.

The carriage with the driver and its remaining inmate, utterly oblivious of what had just taken place, rolled on, and at the corner turned into Fifth

Avenue. Jack McQuillan waited in breathless suspense until the last sound of the horses' hoofs had died away, and then, scrambling to his feet, shook the sand from his garments. He gazed up and down the street. His escape had been observed by nobody.

"Free, free at last!" he exultantly muttered, and then the darkness swallowed him up as he slunk away.

The carriage proceeded up Fifth Avenue until it came to a sudden halt before the Armytage residence. The sudden stoppage awoke the Soggarth Aroon with a jolt out of his pious dreams. For a moment he was confused and did not realize where he was. Then, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, he turned to where his companion had been reclining.

"Mr. Armytage," he began, and then stopped short, with open-mouthed surprise.

The seat next to his was vacant!

"Why, bless my soul!" he exclaimed.

At that moment the coachman opened the door of the carriage, while a number of persons appeared on the steps of the brilliantly illuminated mansion,

from which the strains of dance music drifting out gave evidence that the revelry was still in full blast. The carriage had been heard coming, and among those who had issued out to welcome back the young heir were his sister and Alicia Chubb.

"Where is Mr. Armytage?" stammeringly asked the priest of the coachman.

"That's what I'd like to know," replied the latter in an astonished tone.

"He may have got out ahead and gone into the house," suggested the good father.

"I know he didn't, or I'd 'a' seen him," declared the coachman. "I jumped off the box as soon as I halted the horses and nobody's opened that door before me. Besides, there's his folks out on the steps now, waiting for him."

"What is the matter?" called out Gladys, seeing there was something wrong. "Where is Mr. Harold?"

"That is what we'd like to know," said the Soggarth Aroon, mounting the steps. "He was in the carriage with me, and now he is gone."

"That is very strange," declared the Recorder, who, with the Marquis de Belle-Riviere and Silas

Chubb, had come out to join the girls. "Very strange and very mysterious! May I beg you, father, to give us a brief account of your trip to the Tombs with Mr. Armytage and of your ride back to this place?"

The Soggarth Aroon did so, but even in the telling of the story he now began to have an inkling of the truth, and grew pale and red by turns; as he proceeded, his voice faltered and became choked with tears.

"Surely," he exclaimed, "you do not think that the man in the coach with me was not Mr. Armytage?"

"I am sure of it," declared the Recorder in an angry tone of voice. "It was the prisoner whom I condemned to death, and he, taking advantage of the nap you say you indulged in, made good his escape—an escape in which Mr. Armytage connived, making base use of the permission I gave him to enter the prison."

"If my brother did what you say," defiantly exclaimed Gladys, "he did so for reasons good and sufficient to him, and I am proud of him for having the courage to do it."

"Bravo!" cried the Marquis, clapping his hands, as in duty bound. "Permit me the privilege of sharing your sentiments, mademoiselle."

Gladys gave him a grateful look for his support, which, being observed by Mrs. Van, brought a smile of satisfaction to that worthy person's lips, as she already mentally figured her share of Gladys' dowry.

"Why—why," spluttered Silas Chubb, "this is an unheard-of outrage! Assisting a prisoner to escape—and that a condemned murderer—one of the anarchists who would next have thrown a bomb into the works! And that Harold should do this of all men! Why, the man must be crazy—mad as a March hare!"

"But where is Mr. Armytage?" asked Alicia, in great trepidation for the personal safety of the man she secretly loved.

"Where is he?" repeated the Recorder in accents of scorn. "Go to the Tombs and you will find him there. Go to the cell in Murderers' Row until recently occupied by the escaped convict and you will find this fine gentleman, who has set all the laws of the land at defiance, masquerading in Jack McQuil-



lan's cast-off garments! Oh, it is an old trick—this changing of clothes and substitution of persons! I'm surprised the prison officials permitted themselves to be so easily hoodwinked. I repeat, if you want to find Harold Armytage, go look for him in the Tombs!"

As if in corroboration of his words a messenger boy with a telegram in his hand approached him.

"Please, Yer Honor," said the boy, "I was up ter Yer Honor's house ter deliver dis, an' dey sent me here."

He handed the Recorder the telegram. Tearing open the envelope which contained it, the Recorder read the following message from one of the keepers at the Tombs:

"Jack McQuillan made his escape through the assistance of Armytage. We are holding the latter."

CHAPTER XIV

THE DISCOVERY

THE keeper, after letting out the Soggarth Aroon and the man whom he thought to be Harold Armytage, did not at once go to the counsel-room to take his prisoner back to the cell. He considered him safely enough locked in there, so that he stopped to chat with the door-keeper about local politics, which were red-hot just then, in view of the approaching November elections. They got into a controversy as to who would be the best man to support for district leader at the primaries. The keeper championed the Alderman of the district, while the door-keeper sang the praises of Mike Dempsey.

"De Alderman's de man wot kin hold der boys togedder wid der patronage he controls," declared the keeper.

"Big Mike's der feller wot kin deliver de goods

on 'lection day," affirmed the door-keeper. "Jest tell him wot size majority yer wants, an' der votes'll be dere when dey're counted."

And thus the argument continued for half an hour and finally ended in a draw, when the keeper at last remembered that he had a duty to perform in regard to the prisoner left in the counsel-room, and left the question undecided whether the political fortunes of the district were to be confided to the chief dispenser of the spoils of office or to the leader of a gang of thugs and repeaters.

The official went along the corridor until he reached the counsel-room. Unlocking and opening the door he entered the room, and, approaching the prisoner, tapped him on the shoulder and gruffly said :

"It's to de cell fur yours, Jack; come along."

"Do you think so, my good fellow?" asked Harold in a cool voice, while he stepped more into the light. "Just look at me closely, and perhaps you'll change your mind."

At the sound of his voice the keeper started as if an electric bolt had struck him.

"You're not the prisoner!" he gasped.

"Harold Armytage, at your service," replied our hero, with a low bow. "The prisoner left here over half an hour ago and must have made good his escape by this time."

The whole truth now burst on the official, and his face paled as he realized that unless the fugitive was recaptured and brought back to his cell, it was all up with his job.

"D——n the Recorder!" he burst forth, "fur givin' you a chance to play this trick on us. We'll hold you, all right, though, my man, while we send out a general alarm to the police force."

"You may do anything you please with me," calmly replied Harold, taking out a cigar which he happened to have with him. He produced a match and struck a light. "I've accomplished my purpose," he added, "and I suppose I must stand the consequences, though, luckily, it isn't a hanging matter."

He nonchalantly puffed away at his cigar.

"You'll find it a matter of five years State's prison for you," angrily retorted the keeper. "Drop that cigar. It's against the rules for prisoners to smoke—an' you're a prisoner now."

"Excuse me; I forgot," said the young man

politely, as he threw the cigar away. "You'll find me ready and willing to obey all your rules."

"I'll lock yer in here while I telegraph to der Recorder an' notify ther warden of wot's happened. He'll jump on me neck, I know, but it's all der fault of dat blamed Recorder. If he hadn't given yer dat note yer couldn't 'a' worked dis game."

"That's true as gospel," rejoined Harold with a breezy laugh, "though His Honor couldn't have suspected what use would be made of his letter. I'd like to see his face when he receives and reads your telegram."

For all answer the official left the room, slamming shut the door and securely locking and bolting it. Then he went to send off the telegram which the Recorder received and to arouse the warden and break the bad news to him. When the latter learned what had happened he cursed everybody, from the Recorder down to the door-keeper, sent messages to the sheriff and to police headquarters, and thus started the hunt for the fugitive prisoner. But it was all in vain: that unlucky half hour's talk on politics had given Jack McQuillan the time he needed to make good his escape.

"Now I wonder how the folks up at the house will take it," mused Harold, sinking into one of the wooden chairs in the counsel-room. "There they are up there dancing the aristocratic german while awaiting my return, and here am I, a prisoner, who will be charged with having effected the escape of a condemned murderer. I know what Gladys will say; everything I do is right, simply because I'm her brother. The Recorder will be naturally indignant at the base use, as he will call it, that was made of his act of courtesy, though, as a sensible, intelligent man, he must perceive and admit that I had not the slightest idea of this when he gave me the letter. Silas Chubb will splutter and fume about what he will stigmatize as this new phase of anarchy in which a man belonging to the higher circles of society aids and assists the vilest and lowest to defy the laws of the land. But how will Alicia regard my conduct? I fancied I detected a warmer tone in her welcome to me. She appeared anxious to make a good impression, and, by Jove! no one can dispute that she is a splendid-looking woman. If I were a marrying man now, and discovered that she had as good a heart as she is beau-

tiful to look at, I shouldn't be surprised to find myself actually falling in love with her. But, bah! what have I got to do with women or with love?" he ejaculated, rising from his seat. "What concerns me now is how many years at hard labor in Sing Sing I'm likely to get for this. Of course, the papers will have a big sensation to report to-morrow—or, rather, to-day, for it must be pretty near sunrise. But I don't care! My conscience dictated my action, and it matters nothing to me if the whole world condemns me so long as my conscience approves."

The escape was, in fact, the big sensation, not only of that day, but of many days to come. The occurrence happened too late to get into the earlier editions of the morning papers, but every paper promptly got out an "extra," and by nine o'clock the newsboys were already dashing through the streets yelling: "Extra! Full 'count of der 'scape from der Tombs! Millyuneer helps murderer to break jail!"

At that hour, Harold sat in the warden's own private apartment, eagerly perusing the "extras" as they were brought in to him. When the official

keeper of the Tombs came to him he had expressed no desire to sleep, but had asked whether he could not be taken to some room, not a cell, until he could communicate with his family and counsel.

"As you're not yet arraigned in court and regularly committed," the warden had replied, "I suppose you can have any accommodations you're willing to pay for."

Harold had thanked him for his consideration and had assured him that he (Harold) would not put him into any more trouble by any attempts to escape. He asked for and obtained a new coat and vest for those of the convict's he wore, for a bath and breakfast, and for pen, ink and paper. All his wishes had been complied with. He had written a brief note to the family lawyer, asking him to call on him at the Tombs at his earliest convenience; then a long letter to his sister, stating the motives of his action, and commenting on the way he was being treated.

"Since my eyes were opened," he wrote, "to what our fellow-beings are suffering while we are indulging in unearned and useless luxury, I cannot help observing how this class distinction penetrates

even this prison. If a poor devil had committed my crime—for such I presume it is in the eyes of the law—he would have been hustled into a filthy, unsanitary cell, made to sleep on a mattress thrown on a wooden shelf, fed on prison slops, and hurried before a magistrate, without, perhaps, being permitted to communicate with a living soul. But because I am Mr. Armytage—what they call in their slang a ‘swell guy’—and am reputed to be a millionaire, the entire establishment is at my beck and call, as if this were a big hotel and I the star boarder. Instead of a cell, I am occupying the warden’s own suite of rooms. The one I am sitting in, writing this letter to you, is on an upper floor of the Tombs, large and airy, and furnished comfortably, if not elegantly. Opening into it is a fairly good-sized bedroom, containing an inviting couch, on which I can sleep in comfort if I feel so inclined. My breakfast was served me in this room by an outside caterer and consisted of fruit, a cereal with cream, poached eggs, steak, hot rolls and coffee. The price was one dollar, and cheap at that. Delmonico couldn’t serve at double the price a better breakfast with all the accessories of damask table-cloths and napkins,

silver and fine china. I am to have an equally fine luncheon at twelve o'clock, and at my ordinary dinner hour, if I am not meanwhile bailed out, a regular feast, with a bottle of champagne thrown in, for ten dollars. The warden, his wife and children, wait on me hand and foot. The warden went out himself and bought me a new suit of clothes; his wife acts as my waitress, while his children are my errand boys. One has taken my letter to my lawyer, and the other will bring you this one. They all, down to the prison bootblack, seem to vie in doing honor to their distinguished guest. It is all laughable if it were not so pitiful, and, while I cannot help smiling over their efforts to please, the unbidden tears rise to my eyes when I think how damnable wrong it all is. If this is the usual method of treating the criminal rich when in prison, no wonder they recklessly violate the law; no wonder they become the real anarchists."

His letters having been written and despatched, Harold was pleased when the warden brought him an armful of papers, saying that he might wish to read what the newspapers had to say about him. Every paper in glaring headlines had the story of

how the rich man had gone down to the Tombs and had exchanged places with the poor, condemned murderer incarcerated there. And the thing emphasized the most in each article was that it was the act of a millionaire. That a poor man should help a poor brother in distress did not seem to the papers of any great moment; such jail deliveries had occurred often, and, if this one had been like them, it would not have been accorded over an inch or two of space. But that a millionaire—a member of the swell set—should have done such a thing, made it seem worthy of columns of narration. And this was only in the “extras” gotten out hurriedly. What would it be in the afternoon papers, and the dailies on the next morning? Harold could surmise, for already the reporters were importuning the warden for permission to interview the august prisoner; were asking for his biography, for pictures of himself, his sister, his residence, his steam yacht, while the artists’ staff of the different papers were ready with pen and pencil and camera to draw the usual scenes and snap the usual photographs, which would afterward be published over the caption: “Taken by our artist on the spot.”

All this sensationalism did not surprise Harold, since he had expected and foreseen it; but what made him fairly hold his breath with astonishment, as he read paper after paper, was that every one, without a single exception, characterized his act as that of an insane person.

"We can draw no other conclusion," were the words of one of the comments on the occurrence, "than that Harold Armytage was insane at the moment when he enabled a red-handed murderer to go forth, in all probability, to repeat the nefarious crime for which he had been justly condemned to death. In one moment of mental aberration this young heir to millions, welcomed home after a tour of the world by his immediate family and by the representatives of the world of finance, commerce, culture and fashion, has recklessly cast to the winds all prospects of occupying the high station in life to which he was born, and has opened for himself the door of State's prison or the barred portals of an insane asylum."

The article in question continued in the same strain for half a column, and was typical of all those Harold read.

"So!" exclaimed the young man, with a deep indrawn breath, as he cast the last paper on the floor, "that is the conclusion they arrive at. An act of simple justice from one man to his fellow-man is looked upon by them as a freak of madness! For a millionaire to aid a poor man is rank lunacy! To let a poor devil escape until plans can be matured to save his life from the electric chair is to ostracize oneself from respectable society! Out upon such respectability! I would rather be disreputable!"

He had risen from his chair and was pacing up and down the room in great agitation.

"I may have made a mistake in judgment," he ejaculated, "and if so I am willing to serve a term in prison for my act. But it was prompted by the dictates of my heart and conscience, not by any vagaries of the mind. I deny that I am insane, and as soon as my counsel comes I will direct him to at once promulgate that fact to all the world."

Hardly had he uttered the words, when his lawyer was announced and entered the room. Harold at once called the learned counsel's attention to what the newspapers said about his mentality, and, in an

eager and excited manner and in voluble language, demanded that the report that he was insane be immediately contradicted.

His lawyer listened to him quietly, patiently, as one listens to a querulous child, meanwhile narrowly watching, out of the corner of his eyes, Harold's excitability and the sparkle in his eyes. When he had concluded, the lawyer dryly said:

"My dear boy, you're as crazy as a bed-bug!"

CHAPTER XV

ARRAIGNED

SO you, too, join in the general chorus?" bitterly exclaimed Harold. "I expected more of you as a man of general intelligence and one whom I believed had a heart in its proper place."

"I am first of all your lawyer," gravely retorted Mr. Carruthers, the head of the eminent firm of Carruthers, Bigsby & Carruthers, whose practice was one of the largest in the city and mainly confined to big corporations and wealthy families. "My own personal opinion has nothing to do with this case. But, by Jove! as your lawyer I will proclaim from the house-tops that you are as mad as a March hare. It is the only chance I see to save you from the consequences of such a grave infraction of the law."

"But if I do not wish to be saved?" persisted

Harold. "If I am willing to plead guilty and go to State's prison?"

"No matter what you wish, I have a duty to perform, not only to you, but to your sister, whose heart would be broken to see her brother a common felon; I have to shield the good name your father left to you untarnished—your most precious inheritance. Do you think now that all you have to do is to plead guilty?"

"If you put it in that light——" began the young man in a much moved voice.

"Fortunately," continued the lawyer, "the very comments in the public press to which you object will greatly assist me in the line of defense I intend to mark out. They will serve to mould public opinion, and it will be easier for us to procure a jury who will readily acquit you on the ground of insanity."

"And then, I presume," bitterly declared Harold, "they will send me, a perfectly sane man, to an insane asylum?"

The lawyer wagged his head profoundly and gave his client a sly look. "You leave that part of the business entirely to me," he said. "There are

things in our profession which lawyers do not feel called upon to discuss, even with their own clients. Good-by for the present, Mr. Armytage. Your sister has informed me that she is coming to see you and will probably be here in a few moments. I am going now to see the District Attorney. We will arrange for you to be brought before a committing magistrate this afternoon. You will waive examination and be put under bonds to await the action of the Grand Jury. You will then be free to go where you please until the day of your trial."

He shook hands with his client and left the room just as Gladys and Alicia were ushered in by the warden's obsequious wife.

Gladys' meeting with her brother was very affecting. She ran into his arms and, pillowing her head on his breast, burst into tears. Alicia remained in the background, her bosom heaving with emotion and her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Harold! Harold!" sobbed Gladys; "why did you do this thing?"

"Do not cry, dear," soothingly said her brother, as he fondly stroked her golden hair. "My lawyer, who was just here, assured me that he will save me

from a prison cell." And *sotto voce* he added: "And I swear I will never be placed in an insane asylum."

"But why did you change places with the prisoner?" she asked, raising her tear-stained face to his. "I presume your noble heart dictated your action; but was there no less hazardous way of befriending him?"

"I suppose," declared he, "I could have let him go to Sing Sing and invoked the law's delay in his behalf, with the ultimate result of having the death sentence commuted to a life sentence or a long term in prison. But the injustice of it all struck me so forcibly. You, sister mine, and I were partly at least responsible for the chain of circumstances which led to one man's death and another's conviction for murder. How this was so it would take me too long to explain to you now, but it came home to me so vividly that I instantly began to think what reparation I could make, for your sake as well as mine. It was impossible to restore the dead to life, but it was possible to give liberty to the man whom I considered unjustly deprived of it. The idea of substitution came to me like a flash. I did



not consider its rights or wrongs; it seemed to me like an inspiration from heaven, and I acted on it. That is all I can tell you."

"And, oh, Mr. Armytage—Harold!" exclaimed Alicia, drawing near with streaming eyes, "if they should send you to State's prison for it, it would break your sister's heart—and—and mine."

"I feel deeply grateful to you, Alicia," he said, warmly pressing her hand, "for your sympathy. Next to my sister I know no woman for whom I have so high a regard as for you. But cheer up, you and Gladys, there is nothing to fear on that score. Mr. Carruthers tells me that I cannot be sent to prison, because, you see, I'm crazy."

"Crazy!" ejaculated both girls in one breath.

"Well," explained Harold, with a smile, "I know I'm not and he knows I'm not, but it will do as a matter of defense. And now, ladies, permit me to suggest that you both go home and be as cheerful as you can under the circumstances. I promise you to be home in time to take dinner with you. Mr. Carruthers is arranging to have me released on bail this afternoon. Meanwhile I will take a much needed nap on the bed there—you see what comfort-

able quarters they have provided for me. I've had no sleep now for over twenty-four hours."

He tenderly embraced and kissed his sister and shook Alicia's hand so warmly as to send her away with her heart beating with high hopes.

"He says that, next to his sister, he knows no woman for whom he has so high a regard as for me," she jubilantly thought, as, with Gladys, she passed out of the Tombs to their carriage waiting at the curb. "Guilty or not guilty, sane or insane, a king among men or a felon in a convict's cell, you will always be the same to me—my hero, my god—for I love you—I love you!"

The ladies having left, Harold stretched himself out on the couch and slept as soundlessly and as peacefully as a child until the morning had passed and half of the afternoon had waned. Then he was awakened by the warden, who informed him that he was to be taken to court. He sprang from the bed, made a hasty toilet, and, having donned his coat and hat, expressed his readiness to follow whither he was led.

"It's lucky for you, sir," said the warden, "that the police court is in the building, or it would have

been a ride in the Black Maria for yours, with these dangling at your wrists."

He held up a pair of handcuffs as he spoke.

Harold could not restrain a shiver of repugnance. This was bringing home to him the knowledge that he was, after all, a prisoner, in a way which grated on his nerves.

"But you know I will make no attempt to escape," he said. "Why would it be necessary to heap these indignities on me?"

"It isn't necessary in this case," replied the warden, "because you're not going out of the building. I'm only telling you what would have happened if you were. You see," he somewhat apologetically added, "the afternoon papers have got on to the special privileges allowed you, and they're pounding the sheriff and me to beat the band. And the Recorder, too—what a roasting he's getting for writing that letter! But I'm glad of that."

"And I'm sorry," declared Harold. "The poor man couldn't imagine what use I would make of it, no more than I imagined it myself."

"Well, next time he'll know better," grimly com-

mented the warden, as he opened the door for Harold to pass out.

The prisoner, for that he virtually was, on stepping into the corridor found himself confronted by two policemen, in full uniform and with drawn clubs. The latter ranged themselves in front of the warden, who stepped to Harold's side, and thus the procession moved on to the lower floor, on which the police court was situated. It had to pass for a short distance through the lobby of the Tombs to reach the door leading to the prisoners' pen, in which the accused were confined until their cases were called in court. Harold's face flushed as he observed in the crowd which had gathered there a number of photographers, who "snapped" the view before they could be driven away by the police, which view was published in next day's papers with a highly interesting account of how the millionaire prisoner was taken to court by two policemen and the warden of the Tombs.

He was led into the pen—a low-ceilinged room with narrow, grated windows—hot, stuffy, ill-smelling, and so dimly illuminated from without that already the gas-jets were lighted. On long benches

sat a motley group of prisoners, waiting to be arraigned. Two of the benches were reserved for the "ladies," a sodden, frowzy-looking group, slatternly attired, with unwashed faces and unkempt hair, arrested for the most part on the charge of being drunk and disorderly. On the men's benches were a much tougher crowd, men who had already served terms in prison for burglary or assault, and had been again caught in similar crimes; pickpockets and thieves, some gentlemanly-looking forgers and confidence men—these were to be Harold Armytage's companions for the time being.

A look of disgust came over him as one of the police gruffly ordered the prisoners to crowd more closely together so as to make room for him to sit on one of the benches. He was about to beg the privilege of standing when he noticed that the Soggarth Aroon was present in the pen. The good father was going from prisoner to prisoner, giving each a word of consolation, friendly advice, or a paternal admonition. Perhaps the good priest was aware that Harold would be brought to the pen that afternoon, and had sought and obtained the permission to visit and console the prisoners in order

to be near him during this ordeal. He advanced toward him, holding out both his hands, which Harold clasped.

"Ah, my son," he said, with the sweet smile which gave a sort of angelic look to his countenance, "I fear that you took my little homily too practically, or you would not be here now. But, believe me, your act was done in God's providence, who will overrule it for the comfort of your soul and the salvation of mankind."

"Then you do not believe what the papers say," rejoined Harold—"that it was the crazy freak of a lunatic?"

"Heaven forbid that I should look upon it in that light, though if you had taken me into your confidence I would have been in duty bound to have dissuaded you—or at least," he added, with a sly twinkle in his good-natured eyes, "to have tried to dissuade you."

"And now," said Harold, "I am in the eyes of the law a criminal, no better than these wretches here." He could not forbear a shiver of repulsion as he pointed at the men and women on the benches.

"We are none of us very much better or very

much worse than our fellow-beings," replied the Soggarth Aroon. "These, too, Harold, are your brothers and sisters. What temptations lay in their path, what struggles they made before they finally succumbed, we do not know. But we do know that there is some kernel of good in every one's nature, and it behooves us to seek it out and to nurture and cultivate it until it sprouts and grows into a goodly tree. Come and help me say a good word to these, my soul-sick patients, as I call them."

It was a lesson in practical philanthropy, and as, with the priest, Harold passed from bench to bench and saw how the drooped forms straightened up and the sullen look of despair was replaced by one of hope or mild resignation, his feeling of disgust and aversion gave way to an almost holy resolve to consecrate his life to the alleviation of the lot of those confined in jails.

"Harold Armytage to the bar!" shouted the court-crier at this juncture, and the cry was repeated at the door leading from the pen into the courtroom. Escorted by a policeman and the Soggarth Aroon, Harold passed into the dingy courtroom, which was densely crowded by morbid curiosity-seekers, who

had come to see the millionaire prisoner arraigned. He gave one look about the room and breathed a sigh of relief when he noticed that neither Gladys nor Alicia was present. They had taken the lawyer's advice to remain away and save themselves any further heart-pangs.

At the bar Harold met Mr. Carruthers, and a representative from the District Attorney's office was present on behalf of the people. The magistrate was on the bench and at once took up the formalities, which were very brief indeed. A short affidavit, made by the keeper, detailing the escape, was read and Harold was formally charged with aiding and abetting a prisoner to escape from the city prison. On advice of counsel he made no plea in defense and waived examination. There was then a spirited controversy between the Assistant District Attorney and the defendant's counsel as to the amount of bail to be given, the prosecution, in view of the enormity of the offense, demanding very heavy bail, while the defense, assuring the court that the prisoner had no intention of running away, thought nominal bail would be sufficient.

"Ten thousand dollars, to await the action of

the Grand Jury," tersely decided the justice. Mr. Silas Chubb, who had been notified by Mr. Carruthers to be present, now popped up from his seat in one of the back benches and offered himself as bondsman. He was naturally accepted, and ten minutes later Harold passed out of the courtroom temporarily a free man.

He found the family coach awaiting him at the curb. He was about to enter it, when a burly negro ran up and obsequiously held open the door of the vehicle for him. As Harold put his foot on the carriage steps, the negro bent forward his head and eagerly whispered:

"I'm Jack McQuillan, boss, an' yer slave fur life. Wakin' or sleepin', I'll be allus near yer ter protec' yer with all me power an' all me strengt'!"

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE BRINK OF A PROPOSAL

WHEN Harold reached home he found quite a company gathered to welcome him. Gladys had been assured by Mr. Carruthers that there was no doubt of her brother's release under bail, and she had sent out a hurry notice for a five-o'clock tea, to which there had been a generous response.

"Here comes our wild-eyed maniac," was the salute with which he was greeted, as, in company with Silas Chubb, he entered the drawing-room.

"Surely, ladies and gentlemen," he replied, "you do not believe the nonsense published in the papers?"

"Nonsense or not," grimly declared Silas Chubb, "you are either an anarchist or a lunatic. We choose to consider you the latter, for what would become of the bulwarks of society, the very founda-

tion stones on which it rests, if one who should be its mainstay and its brightest flower should act in his sober senses as you have done?"

This noble sentiment was generally applauded, and then Mr. Chubb tersely added :

"My own opinion is that you are a little of both."

"Anarchist or not, insane or sane," hotly retorted Harold, "I stand by my action and am prepared to take the consequences."

The conversation then became general, while, between the drinking of tea and the eating of cake, the men and women present shook hands with Harold and personally assured him of their sympathy. Among those who thus paid their respects to him was the Marquis de Belle-Riviere.

"You acted like a *preux chevalier*," he said. "In France you would have been acclaimed the hero of the people, and they would have borne you through the streets of Paris with your head crowned with laurels. My ancestor, the Maréchal, in much the same way rescued a political prisoner from the Bastille. He received a triumphal procession, and, his act causing a change of government, he was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor."

"They do things differently in France," smiled Harold.

"Ah, yes, in many things," admitted the Marquis with a sigh and a characteristic shrug of the shoulders. "For instance, there is Mademoiselle Gladys, so beautiful, so good of heart; she is constantly surrounded by a group of admirers, each hoping to be the man who will be made happy by her choice. And not one of them has the slightest regard for you as the head of the family; not one, I dare say, has come to you and respectfully asked permission to pay his respects to mademoiselle, your sister."

"Oh, in America," laughingly replied Harold, "that sort of thing doesn't count for much, not even in the eyes of the young lady concerned. She cares very little if the suitor has the permission of her parents or guardians; she does care a great deal how the ardent swain impresses her. If he gains her heart, she knows well enough she can obtain the permission of her family, for, as a rule, her will is law and all bow to her slightest behest. That is a characteristic of the American girl, you know, Marquis."

"The American girl is all the more enchanting,"

he returned with a gallant bow, "on account of the independence of her spirit."

Harold gave the Frenchman a keen look, and, with a smile, added: "Am I right in assuming, Marquis, that you are delicately insinuating that you would like to have my permission to pay your addresses to my sister?"

The nobleman gave a bow almost to the ground.

"If you will so honor me," he murmured.

"Well, you may have it for what it's worth," laughed Harold. "And that isn't much, I assure you, in the eyes of a girl like Gladys."

The Marquis passed along, satisfied that he had accomplished the purpose of his chat with his host, and was soon thereafter engaged in an animated conversation with Miss Armytage.

Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster took his place.

"I am announcing a freak party for next Wednesday at my house, Harold," she said in her usual bumptious manner, "and I shall exhibit you as the greatest as well as the latest society freak."

"So that's what I have become, is it?" asked Harold, always ready to humor that lady's lively whims.

"We have always a collection of freaks on hand," she continued, "but never have we had one like you. There's the man, for instance, with a hundred thousand dollar income who goes in for vegetarianism and never spends more than twenty cents for what he calls a square meal; there's the woman who maintains out of her own purse a hospital for cats and dogs, but who is deaf as a post when she is called upon for a contribution for a children's home; there's Mr. So-and-so, who gives monkey dinners, and Miss You-know-who, who, at her receptions, has all her guests appear dressed like babes in swaddling clothes. Oh, I have them on my list. I will invite them all. It will be too funny for anything. But, as I have said, you will be the greatest freak."

"And, pray, how do you make that out?"

"Honest, now, don't you know you are? Here you are, a millionaire, with a steam yacht, fine stable of blooded horses, a residence on the Avenue and a country place at Tuxedo, a leader in fashionable circles and one who should be a shining light in society, upsetting every preconceived notion of what a gentleman in your station should be and do by befriending, at the risk of your own liberty,

one of a class which in our eyes does not at all exist. What else can persons think and say but that you are a freak? The next thing we'll hear is that you are distributing your wealth among the poor, and making yourself penniless."

"And if I really should make such use of what is my own, what then?"

"Then my parlors could not accommodate all who would want to gaze upon the wonder of the age. I should have to hire Madison Square Garden to exhibit you. Don't forget," she added, with a loud laugh, and tapping him on the arm with her fan, "next Wednesday evening, at my house, Mr. Freak!"

In this desultory way the conversation went on for an hour, and then the company dispersed, until Harold found himself alone in the drawing-room with Alicia. Whether this was accidental or by design on the part of the latter it would be difficult to say. But the fact was that all the guests had gone home and Gladys had repaired to her own room, and that it was the gloaming, the mystic hour before the evening lights are lit, when vague shad-

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ows rest everywhere, and the very air seems to breathe out love and romance.

Alicia had sunk on a low, silken divan, the tint of its covering exquisitely matching her rich, sensuous beauty. Her gown, slightly raised in front, exposed a foot that could have worn Cinderella's slipper, and through the filmy meshes of her lace gown her bosom could be seen to rise and fall with the emotions surging in her heart. She reclined there on the divan, covertly watching Harold, in the semi-dusk of the room, out of her eyes half closed by her long, dark lashes.

He would have been less than a man had he not felt his senses thrill and the blood course more rapidly through his veins at the sight of such exquisite female loveliness. He approached the divan, and, at a slight intimation from her, seated himself at her side. He took her hand, which she allowed to remain passively in his.

"Alicia," he said, raising her hand to his lips and pressing a kiss on it, "I am glad we are alone. I wish to assure you what comfort your visit was to me in the Tombs this morning. Whatever trials I would have to undergo, I felt that I could sus-

tain them, upheld by Gladys' sisterly love and your friendship."

She slightly shivered at that last word. It sounded so cold in her ears.

"Friendship will do much, Harold," she murmured, faintly pressing his hand, "but devotion more. We have grown up from childhood together; we were chums and playfellows until the wide ocean rolled between us. Other scenes and other women may have come between you and your boyhood companion, but absence only served to strengthen the devotion I always had for you, which is part of my life. Your joys will always be my joys, if you will permit me to share them—your sorrows will always make my heart bleed."

These were very dangerous words for a young and very beautiful girl to utter to a man even less impressionable than Harold was. Perhaps she used them intentionally to fire his heart. Almost involuntarily he moved more closely to her, and thoughts of her as his wife flitted through his brain. It would be perhaps saying too much to state that a proposal fluttered on his lips, but his next words would have been those of a lover had not the

tête-à-tête just then been broken up by the entrance of a footman, who came to light the gas-jets and to announce that a young lady desired to see him.

Alicia angrily sprang to her feet. Farewell, for the present at least, to the gloaming and the love and romance! They vanished as the lights were turned on and a brilliant illumination flooded the drawing-room.

The footman handed Harold a dainty card, on which was inscribed a single name.

"Agnes Merrihew," he read. "I do not recognize the name," he added. "Is she somebody whom Gladys knows?"

"I believe not," frigidly replied Alicia. "I never heard the name before." Already in her heart she began to hate the person, whoever it was, who had come between her and, as she believed, the proposal she longed to hear.

"Are you sure the lady asked to see me?" Harold inquired of the footman.

"Yes, sir; she begged me to say that she came in behalf of the sister of the man——"

"A messenger from Jack McQuillan's sister,"

interrupted Harold eagerly. "I shall be glad to see her. Show her up at once."

The footman departed on his errand.

"As you are about to receive some person on the part of a murderer's sister," said Alicia, with a scarcely concealed sneer, "you will permit me to take my leave."

"As you please," he rather curtly replied, "though I had hoped you would have been interested enough to remain and listen to our conversation. I promised the man to take care of his sister Maggie, and I was wondering where I could find her. I shall know now."

Alicia knew by the tone of his voice that she had made a mistake, and hastened to recover the lost ground.

"Oh, I am interested in anything that interests you, Harold," she purred, "only I felt a little vexed that our pleasant *tête-à-tête* should be interrupted by a visitor, who might have come at a more opportune moment."

"Any moment is opportune that brings me the information I desire," he replied, but partly mollified. "Still, I think, after all, that it is best for you

to withdraw. Miss Merrihew might be embarrassed at the presence of a third person."

"How considerate of the feelings of a perfect stranger," thought Alicia, inwardly raging; but she was careful not to give expression to her thoughts.

"As you please," she said aloud. "Only, I hope you will get the information you want and that you will not be detained by the interview beyond the dinner hour."

She made him a curtsy and went toward the door leading to Gladys' rooms, just as Agnes timidly advanced into the room. The angel of the slums did not see the magnificently robed and gorgeously bejeweled woman who paused at the door to cast a look at her which took in, at a glance, her neat, if plain, attire, her lithe, well-proportioned figure and the classic beauty of her face. Alicia had expected to see some frowzy, ill-dressed individual of the lower classes, and she gave a great start of surprise when she now recognized her to have been a schoolmate, if not a classmate, of Gladys and herself at the fashionable ladies' seminary. She had entirely forgotten her name, but she now remembered the face of one who had not only been a re-

markably bright scholar, but also the daughter of a man popularly supposed to be rolling in wealth.

"I don't understand it at all," she muttered as she passed out of the room, "how she comes to be dressed in such cheap clothes, and to come on an errand like this. But this I do know, or rather feel—that I hate you, Agnes Merrihew, and will hate you as long as I live."

CHAPTER XVII

A VISIT TO THE HOME

HAROLD advanced to meet Agnes, and, like Alicia, was struck with the neatness of her attire and her lady-like demeanor.

"You are welcome, Miss Merrihew," he said, extending his hand in greeting, "and doubly welcome in bringing me a message from a young girl for whom I promised to care."

"You are kind indeed to say so, Mr. Armytage," she replied, in a voice whose gentle sweetness struck his ear like the chords of some favorite melody. "But I had no reason to believe that I would be otherwise than well received by one who has so signally shown that his heart beats for the sufferings of the poor and lowly."

Harold bowed his acknowledgments to this com-

pliment, and thought that the speaker had a very charming way of expressing herself.

"Besides," continued Agnes, "I had a dear friend and companion in my schoolhood days—and you are her brother."

"What!" ejaculated the young man in surprise; "you know Gladys?"

"We were at the seminary together, though she was in a grade above mine."

"Pardon me for not offering you a seat sooner," he said, bringing forward a chair. She seated herself, while Harold paced the room in a thoughtful mood.

"Strange!" he said, pausing before her; "if you were in the same school with my sister, you must also be acquainted with Miss Chubb—Miss Alicia Chubb."

Agnes nodded her head in assent.

"She was just here a moment ago when your card was brought up, and, in answer to my inquiry, said she had never heard of your name in her life."

A momentary flush passed over the young girl's cheeks.

"She was older than Miss Armytage and I," she

then said, "and left the seminary before we did. I never was on very friendly terms with her, and she may have forgotten that such a person as I ever existed, or"—with a deprecating glance at her simple attire—"she may not choose to remember me."

It was strange how rapidly Alicia sank in Harold's esteem as he heard these words, and how, in the same proportion, Agnes rose. He could not account for it himself when he afterwards thought about it.

"Would you mind my sending for Gladys?" he asked. "I am sure she would like to greet her former schoolmate, and to listen to what you have to tell me, provided it must not remain a secret between us two."

"Oh, no; Miss Armytage is welcome to hear all I have to say, and I should dearly love to see her and speak to her again."

Harold summoned the footman and directed him to ask Miss Armytage to step into the drawing-room. A few moments later Gladys appeared, and, at sight of Agnes, impulsively rushed toward her with outstretched arms. The latter had arisen at her en-

trance, and the two girls fondly embraced and kissed each other.

"Why, Agnes Merrihew, as I live!" exclaimed Gladys, holding her off at arm's length to have a good look at her, and then embracing her again. "Alicia told me that you had some lady visitor, Harold, but mentioned no name. If I had known it was my old schoolmate I should not have waited to be summoned."

"Ah," murmured Agnes, with tears in her eyes, "you were always so good and kind to me."

"Well! well!" replied Gladys, as she drew the young girl over to the divan and sat down with her; "so we meet again after years of separation. I was wondering what had become of you. I had left school, you know, when I read of your father's loss of fortune and his sad death, which must have put an end to all your hopes of a bright future. Do you know, Harold," she added in a lively manner, "in Miss Merrihew you behold a product of the Golden West? She is a Colorado girl, can ride like an Amazon, throw a lariat like a cowboy, and shoot like an Indian scout."

"Please, don't!" murmured Agnes, her face crim-

soned with blushes, which Harold thought very becoming to her.

"And do you still write poetry?" asked Gladys, who seemed bent on exhibiting all her friend's accomplishments to her brother. "She's a poet, too, you must know, Harold, and she did me the honor to let me read the first verses she ever wrote. Every once in a while I come across a poem in a magazine or paper simply signed 'Agnes.' I often wondered whether that meant you. Now I am sure of it."

"Please, Gladys!" helplessly protested the young girl.

"I'm sure it is doubly an honor," gallantly declared Harold, "to be made acquainted with a friend of my sister, and one who has so many talents of her own."

"But why are your verses all so sad, nowadays, Agnes?" asked Gladys. "Those that I have read are all about what you term the 'common people' and depict their trials and sufferings. I remember one in particular that struck me quite forcibly. It was entitled 'The Heart of the People.' The open-

ing stanza, as near as I can recollect it, reads like this :

“The heart of the people beats fondly and true,
The heart of the people, which means me and you;
Oh, let not that heart be broken in twain,
Oh, give it just cause to be joyful again.’ ”

“Bravo!” cried Harold, clapping his hands. “Miss Merrihew, you must promise me right now to give me a copy of the complete poem. I really want to read it. I feel that it will give me an inspiration in the line of conduct I have marked out for my future.”

“If it should,” fervently exclaimed Agnes, “the thought that I had written it would make me feel so happy. You ask me, Gladys—you will permit me to call you Gladys, will you not?—why I write in such a sad strain. If you could see what I see every day of the undeserved wretchedness of the poor, if you could hear the pitiful stories of want that are poured into my ears, and if you would come to reflect that most if not all of this suffering is needlessly imposed on the poor by the greed and heartlessness of the

rich, you, too, would feel your heart stirred to utter a cry for help for the helpless, and of denunciation for their oppressors."

She had risen to her feet as she spoke, and two hectic spots gleamed on her cheeks, while her eyes flashed. She seemed like one transformed—like a militant angel—Harold thought as he wonderingly gazed at her—ready to do battle in behalf of her wards.

"And this brings me to the object of my visit," added Agnes in milder tones. "I am connected with the rescue home for young girls on Water Street. Last night I brought Maggie McQuillan there. She, like all of us, has read of your act of heroic sacrifice for her brother's sake, and she would like to thank you on her bended knees and to kiss your hand. Will you come with me and afford her this gratification, and also assure her, if you can, of her brother's safety?"

"I will go with the greatest of pleasure," replied Harold, "and go at once if Gladys can spare me during the dinner hour."

"I guess we can manage to eat the meal without you," declared his sister; "only, you must promise

me not to get into any more scrapes like you did last night. However nobly you may act, we cannot be bailing you out of jail the whole time."

"I promise to keep out of mischief, sister mine," he laughingly rejoined, as he put his arm around her waist and fondly kissed her.

"On that promise I will let you go, and I charge you, Agnes, with his safe keeping," she said, with mock solemnity. "And, Agnes, dear, now that we have met again, you must come to see me often. I would ask you even to take up your home with us, only I suppose your heart is in your work and you wish to be near your charges. But come and see me as frequently as you can and tell me all about the good work you are doing. You will find me an eager and sympathetic listener."

She gave her another squeeze and a kiss and escorted her and Harold to the front door, waving her hand to them as they descended to the sidewalk.

From an upper window in the house, in the light cast by a street-lamp, Alicia saw the two depart.

"She came to fetch him somewhere," she muttered, "and there they go. He is offering her his arm as if they were old acquaintances, and they

are chatting as if they were on the most familiar terms. If I thought—but, bah! have I so little confidence in my own powers of attraction that I should fear an insignificant girl the first time he sees her? Only this I know—that I hate her—hate her for coming between me and the prize I hoped to win to-night.”

All unconscious of these vengeful thoughts, Agnes walked at Harold's side to the corner where they would take the car for downtown. She seemed to be walking on air, and her heart kept throbbing in a most unaccountable way. Near the corner of the street a burly negro was lounging against a lamp-post; as Harold passed him he gave an almost imperceptible nod of his head, which the negro replied to with the same signal. When the car came along Harold assisted Agnes to enter it, and he followed her aboard. As the car went on its way the negro was standing on the back platform.

When they reached the rescue home, Agnes led Harold into the building, while the negro stationed himself like a sentinel at the door. The young girl introduced her escort to Mr. Messenger, and the two men cordially shook hands. While Agnes went to

bring Maggie to the office, Mr. Messenger broached his favorite subject—praise of his *Agnus Dei*, as he called her. He told Harold the circumstances which had brought about her connection with the home and the good she was accomplishing every day of her life. He also spoke highly of her literary talent, which was shown not only in verses, but also in the essays she wrote, chiefly on social problems coming under her own observation. These essays were eagerly accepted by magazines and newspapers, and were shortly to be bound and published in book form, as was also a volume of her collected poems. In answer to a question from Harold, he told how she had rescued Maggie from the hands of her tormentor and brought her to the home.

"The institution should be proud of her," declared the young man, gratified by what he heard. "She was formerly my sister's schoolmate, and we are glad that by her coming to see me this evening Gladys has been able to renew her girlhood friendship and I to make her acquaintance."

"And you will never regret it, sir," Mr. Messenger assured him. "She is indeed what she is called, an angel of the slums."

At this juncture Agnes entered the room, leading in Maggie all in a tremor of emotion and delight. She would have thrown herself at his feet had not Harold restrained her.

"Yer saved Jack's life—yer saved Jack's life!" she kept repeating, pressing her lips to his hand and bedewing it with tears. "I'll pray fur yer, sir, every night fur dat, an' fur not bein' too proud to come down here to receive der t'anks of a poor girl like meself."

"If I felt any doubts of the justification of my act," he replied, moved in spite of himself by her words and actions, "I feel sure now. The whole world may consider me crazy, but, at least, I have made two human beings happier than they were."

"I have read the comments of the press," smilingly said the Rev. Mr. Messenger, "and it is not that you have saved a prisoner from jail that raises a doubt of your sanity, for that is a common occurrence, but that you have broken through the conventionalities of your class. I am in the same boat myself. I am a clergyman who has no regard for the formalities of his profession, and they are saying that I, too, am a little touched in the upper story."

"Well, we will commiserate with each other," laughed Harold. "Will you permit me to send you a check for one thousand dollars to-morrow for this institution? In return, it would be well to let Maggie remain here until we see what eventually happens to her brother and myself."

"Your check will come in most opportunely," said the gratified founder of the home, "and I thank you for your generosity."

Maggie having somewhat recovered her self-possession, now plied Harold for the details of how he had managed to get her brother out of the Tombs. He good-naturedly repeated the whole story and further gladdened her heart by assuring her that Jack was safe and that he could produce him at any moment.

When the time came for him to leave he had to almost drag himself away from the tearful and radiantly happy Maggie. He shook hands with Mr. Messenger and exhorted Agnes to be sure and heed Gladys' request about coming to see them often. He promised to be a frequent visitor to the home, and to do all he could to further its interests.

Agnes parted with him at the door, and there was

an unbidden tear in her eye as she stood watching him pass down the street. She noticed that the negro who had been lounging against the lamp-post, and whom she had afterwards observed on the car, was now following him at a respectful distance. She surmised his identity, and a smile came to her lips.

"It's Jack McQuillan," she murmured, "constituting himself Mr. Armytage's body-guard. He needs one in this low neighborhood. Heaven shield and protect him from all harm for his sister's sake—and for mine."

CHAPTER XVIII

MRS. VAN'S FREAK PARTY

MRS. VAN'S freak party came off on the appointed Wednesday evening, and was the talk of the town and of the society papers for weeks after.

She had requested each of the freaks to appear in such a way that his or her particular fad could be told at a glance, and there is nothing that pleases your faddist more than to be thus placed on exhibition.

Thus the vegetarian came with his pockets stuffed with sample boxes of his favorite meat substitute, which he distributed to all, at the same time expatiating on the virtues of hygienic cookery at twenty cents a square meal to an audience which preferred a five-dollar Delmonico dinner. The lady with a super-developed fondness for cats and dogs was there

with the cutest, flossiest thing in poodles, which she carried around in her arms all the evening and held up for universal admiration. The man who gave the monkey dinners brought with him a highly intelligent ape, grinning and chattering all the while, who acted as his valet in the cloak-room and as his waiter at the midnight supper. The lady of the babes' parties came attired like an infant of the tender age of two years, and showed how excruciatingly funny it was to reply with "ooh-ooh" and "goo-goo" to all questions addressed to her. There were also present the man who played the piano with the tip of his nose, and the lady who whistled, the society swell who could do acrobatic stunts and who had been the leading spirit in an amateur circus, and the young lady who gave screeching imitations of the tough girl.

Mrs. Van had gathered them all in, in numbers too great for each one's particular phase of idiocy to be detailed in this place, and they all danced and capered and went through their "monkeyshines" as if life held no serious thought for them, and even amusement itself was not entertaining unless it was vacuous, insipid and stupid.

Those who came to laugh at the freaks, but did not consider themselves of them, thought it was necessary to be walking fashion-plates or animated advertisements of their boundless wealth. Such a lavish display of silks and satins and priceless laces, such a flash and glitter of diamonds—in the hair and ears, on the bosoms, around the necks and waists, in seams on the gowns and as buckles for the slippers—had probably never before been seen under the roof of a single house. And the women thus attired—spending tens and hundreds of thousands in riotous extravagance, the proceeds of their husbands' or fathers' successful speculations in Wall Street, or in wheat, cotton, oil or other common necessity of mankind—eased their consciences, if they had any, by sending an occasional check for a hundred or a thousand dollars to some pet charity and by having their names emblazoned in the institution blue book as a "patroness" or "benefactress."

In the streets without, carriage after carriage rolled up, leaving more gorgeously attired butterflies of fashion and their escorts, guests to this most novel function of the season, who passed into the house between two rows of admiring "common peo-

ple," some of them too thinly and poorly clad for the time of the year, and some wondering where their next meal was to come from.

At ten o'clock, when practically all who had been invited had arrived, Mrs. Van, in a really witty little speech, introduced her various freaks to the company, winding up with putting Harold himself on exhibition, much to the latter's surprise and barely concealed chagrin.

"Insane, but perfectly harmless, I assure you," she said, pointing him out to her guests. "Mr. Armytage, the millionaire friend and champion of the poor and down-trodden, who rescues condemned murderers from jail. I'm proud of him because none of you has a fad that is anywhere near as costly as his. I am told that there are hundreds of jail-birds yearning for a visit from him, and ten thousand of the lowly right here in New York, each of whom would be satisfied with the touch of a ten-dollar bill. My champion freak, ladies and gentlemen!"

Harold had to bite his lips and swallow his chagrin as best he could. It was no use to defend himself against this raillery in a company like this.

When the laughter and applause which greeted

her remarks had subsided, Mrs. Van began the "intellectual" entertainment of the evening by requesting the man who played the piano with his nose to give an exhibition of his peculiar talents. Then the girl who whistled gave a rendition of the "Mocking-bird," with whistling variations; the amateur circus man did his acrobatic stunts, and the lady from Fifth Avenue gave a realistic and slangy delineation of the "Belle of Avenue A." Other similar features on the program followed in rapid succession, all of which were received with shouts of laughter and expressions of intense delight by the highly cultured and discriminating audience, and then the spacious drawing-rooms were cleared for the dance. A really fine band of music, stationed behind an arrangement of palms, struck up the sensuous strains of a dreamy waltz, and soon the gay couples were gliding over the highly polished parquet flooring, from which the rugs had been removed.

The Marquis de Belle-Riviere, who had of course been invited, seeing that Gladys was to be present, approached her, and, in his most gallant and Gallic manner, begged the honor of having her as a partner in the dance. Gladys graciously consented, and

the two became the cynosure of all eyes as they kept rhythmic time with the music in the mazy steps of the waltz, which the Marquis danced to perfection. The "Willie-boys" with admiring eyes watched the perfectly matched pair.

"Ah, by Jove!" declared one, "if we could do a waltz like that, that French marquis wouldn't cut us out, doncherknow?"

"I s'pose we won't be in it with Gladys after to-night," commented another. "I'm going to awsk my governor for an allowance, doncherknow, and take a run over to Paris and get some French style on me."

If the "Willie-boys" acknowledged their defeat as far as the young American heiress was concerned, the fair and portly mothers of eligible daughters were equally frank in respect to the scion of the French nobility.

"A marquis now," said one, addressing the lean and gaunt offspring of her bosom, "and a duke when his uncle dies. It's too provoking to see Gladys gobble him up before our very eyes. Oh, Arabella, why weren't you born more good-looking even if less wealthy?"

"It isn't Gladys' good looks he's after," spitefully declared Arabella, "but her check-book. I'd rather marry an American if he were only a clerk in a dry-goods store."

Which was only another application of the fable of the fox and the sour grapes.

At the conclusion of the dance Gladys complained of the oppressive heat, which afforded the Marquis the chance of offering to take her to the conservatory, where ices and cooling drinks were being served. She nodded her consent, and the nobleman led her through one of the long French windows at the rear of the drawing-room into a perfect bower, cool and delightful, where the air was perfumed with the fragrance of a hundred exotics, the eye pleased with the floral beauties everywhere displayed, and the ear charmed with the tinkling of the water in the fountain which formed the center-piece of the conservatory. Around the basin of this fountain ran a circular bench, but it was already filled by budding beauties and their swains. The Marquis conducted his fair companion along one of the pebbly paths radiating from the fountain and leading to a rustic arbor with just room enough for two, and shut out

from prying eyes by trailing vines. A hanging lamp of fancifully wrought iron and dark-tinted glass depended from the roof of the arbor and dimly illuminated it. Here, surrounded by the beauties of sound and sight, the senses lulled by the faint strains of the distant music, a loving pair could sit and dream the hours away in an ecstasy of bliss.

This arbor was one of the tools of trade of the wily marriage-broker, and many an international match had been arranged therein, to the financial profit of the fair and buxom widow of Van Courtlandt and of DePeyster. She had no need to give a prospective bridegroom a tip as to its locality, though she sometimes did so. As a rule he discovered it himself. Mrs. Van would sometimes admit to her most intimate friends that that arbor was worth to her its weight in gold.

Fortune smiled on the Marquis to-night, for he found the arbor unoccupied; and leading Gladys to the rustic bench, on which two could just find a seat, he left her there, with an apology, while he went to get her an ice and something to drink. He soon returned bearing a salver containing the ice,



some fancy cakes, two glasses and a bottle of champagne.

"Permit me to play the waiter," he gaily exclaimed, depositing the tray on a handy tabouret. Then, spreading a napkin over her dress, he handed her a glass of the sherbet and some of the cake. He served himself with the same and for a time the two sat eating and talking the usual commonplaces. Then, removing the dishes, he took up the bottle of champagne.

"Ah, the grand wine of my own France!" he cried, as he deftly opened the bottle and poured the foaming liquid into the glasses. "Its spirit is joyous like that of my countrymen; its taste divine like a woman's kisses; it is the wine of love and glory." He handed her one of the dainty tulip-shaped glasses.

"We will drink," he said, raising his glass, "to love and glory."

"To love and glory," slowly repeated Gladys as she touched her glass to his. Then they drank the toast.

"It is a grand combination," she said as she laid down the empty glass; "but tell me, Marquis, does

it not sometimes happen that one has to choose between them?"

"Sometimes—yes," he admitted with a characteristic shrug of the shoulders.

"And in that case?"

"*Ma foi!* it depends. See, mademoiselle, I come of a distinguished family. Back to the time of the Crusaders our watchword has been glory—glory for France above all and then glory for the Belle-Rivieres. It was the oriflamme which led my ancestors into the thickest of the battle; if they came back alive the glory was theirs—if they died, it was a glorious death."

"And the ladies Belle-Riviere?" asked Gladys in a peculiar tone of voice.

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders and gazed at her keenly before he answered.

"Some of them preferred love to glory," he then said. "It is not for me to say whether their choice was wise or not. Happiness sometimes dwells amidst obscurity. But there have been ladies who linked their names with the Belle-Rivieres for the sake of the glory of the family, and lo! love came to them, too, and they were doubly happy."

There was no gainsaying the meaning of his words. Gladys had too keen an intelligence not to know that he was paving the way for a proposal. She knew her fate would be decided in the next few moments. She could stretch forth her hand and grasp the prize. Marquise now, and Duchess when the old Duke died. She was almost angry at herself that, beyond an elation of pride, her heart lay heavy in her bosom.

"But if the glory is that of the Belle-Rivieres," she asked in a low voice, "and the love that comes after marriage is for another?"

"The ladies Belle-Riviere have always been women of honor," he replied, all his pride of race stung to the quick. "Some have gone loveless to the grave, none has ever cast the shadow of a stain on the family name. Ah, mademoiselle," he added, in more fervent tones, "I cannot pretend to be blind to the struggle that is going on in your heart. I cannot expect that in the short time you have known me, you should have learned to love me. But I have learned the sweet lesson and I offer you my heart and the honor and glory of Belle-Riviere. Accept me, I pray, and my love will awaken a respon-

sive chord in your heart ; accept me, if you so see fit, for the glory of my name, and, I assure you, love, too, will come to render you doubly happy."

He passed his arm around her waist as he spoke, and gazed into her eyes with a look which seemed to hypnotize her. She scarcely knew that she was talking, yet she clearly said :

"Let us hope for your sake and mine that love will come, Marquis de Belle-Riviere ; I accept you for the glory of your name."

That same night the Marquis cabled to his uncle, the Duke, as follows :

"I have captured la belle Américaine. The glories of Belle-Riviere will be revived."

CHAPTER XIX

THE TRIAL

THE announcement of the engagement of Miss Gladys Armytage, heiress in her own right to a two-million dollar interest in the Armytage Printing Press Works of New York, to Cæsar Claude Etienne, Marquis de Belle-Riviere, of the Department of the Bouches du Rhône and of the Faubourg St. Germain, Paris, was received by society and the press with the usual comments which greet such alliances. Every daughter of a retired sugar king, coal baron, railroad magnate or pickle manufacturer became green with envy at the thought that Gladys had captured the catch of the season; every sap-headed "Willie-boy" felt called upon to deplore the lack of patriotism in the modern American girl who would prefer the degenerate scion of an effete no-

bility, as he phrased it, to a sturdy son of democracy like himself.

The more sensational press—while printing portraits of the prospective bride and groom, and pictures of the château on the Rhône and the hotel in the Faubourg, as also of portions of a trousseau as yet unbought and unthought of—made the betrothal the basis of many a fiery editorial, in which they defiantly charged that the Old World, unable to conquer America by force of arms, was using the more insidious and more successful means of winning the hearts of our American girls in order to capture our American dollars.

Meanwhile Etienne and Gladys, having received Harold's good-natured, fraternal consent and blessing, were wholly oblivious to or ignored any ill-natured comments of press and public, and went on their own way, giving or attending receptions, dinners, theater parties, and all the diversions of the social swim, each having an honest liking and esteem for the other and sincerely hoping that before the wedding their mutual feelings would have ripened into love.

All this while the firm of Carruthers, Bigsby &

Carruthers were busy with the preparation for Harold's trial. The Grand Jury had brought in an indictment in which Harold Armytage was charged with having wilfully, maliciously, feloniously and with criminal intent aided and abetted the escape of a prisoner from the city prison of the city of New York, to wit, one John McQuillan, tried for and convicted of murder in the first degree, against the peace and dignity of the people of the State of New York. To this indictment Harold had been called before the Court of General Sessions to plead, and, by advice of counsel, had remained mute, and the clerk of the court had entered a technical plea of not guilty on the papers. The prisoner's bail was renewed and the trial was set down for one month from that day, when the Recorder would be on the bench. The whole proceeding did not last over five minutes, and most of it was like so much Greek to Harold, who had never had any patience with the technicalities of the law.

As Mr. Carruthers, the head of the law firm and his chief counsel, now rarely or never consulted him as to the conduct of the case, in which there was no dispute of facts except on the one question of the

sanity of the accused, Harold himself paid no attention to it. He did not even seem to perceive a peculiar coincidence in the fact that a number of persons were introduced to him by his sister or Alicia at his own home, or at receptions or entertainments, who would in a careless, off-hand manner inquire about his general health ; whether he was sure he had fully recovered from that sunstroke which had prostrated him for several weeks while crossing the Desert of Sahara ; whether he was troubled with insomnia, absent-mindedness, twitching of the fingers, etc., etc. He thought it was a great bore to be questioned in this way, and that the physicians ought to have better manners than to drag their shop-talk with them when they paid social visits.

He did not suspect that it was all part of a wily scheme hatched by his counsel, with the assistance of his sister and Alicia, and with the actual connivance of the District Attorney and the Recorder. The District Attorney was a man of very peculiar ideas for the position he held. He in fact secretly sympathized with Harold and privately told some of his cronies that he would have acted in a similar manner if he had been in Harold's place. He did not care to

see him punished, but the statute was mandatory, and there was no way out of it but to have the prisoner judicially decreed to have been insane at the time of the commission of the crime. He would make but a perfunctory effort to prevent the trial jury from bringing in such a verdict. A brief confinement in an insane asylum, already selected, would follow, and then Harold would be released as cured.

The Recorder readily agreed to this plan because he sincerely believed Harold to have been insane, deeming it impossible for a person in full possession of his mental faculties to have made such use of the letter to the warden. He thought the medical experts would find no difficulty in presenting sufficient evidence to convince the jury, and, feeling his own conscience clear in the matter, saw no reason why he, himself, should not preside at the trial. As to any criticism in the public press, he was serenely indifferent to it, as long as he was sure in his own mind that he was right in any line of conduct he marked out for himself.

Gladys and Alicia, being told by Mr. Carruthers that this was the only way to save Harold from State's prison, naturally did all they could to as-

sist the lawyer and kept the whole matter a secret from Harold lest he should put a spoke in their wheel.

As to Harold, the nearer the day of trial approached the more he disliked the idea that any act of his should be stigmatized as the emanation of a diseased mind. He did not relish the thought of being sentenced to Sing Sing; he considered the ends of justice would be sufficiently subserved—since he was not permitted to plead guilty—if he were found guilty by the jury and sentence suspended indefinitely by the Recorder. Of one thing he was fully determined—never would he permit them, if he could possibly help it, to place him in a lunatic asylum, not even for five minutes. He smiled grimly as he felt of the well developed muscles of his arms, and thought of the well stocked arsenal he had in his gun-room. Then he thought of Jack McQuillan, that prodigy of strength, who was worth a dozen men as a body-guard. The result of his cogitations was that he had several interviews with the burly negro ever lurking in the neighborhood, and finally engaged him as his valet and gave him sleeping accommodation in the house.

The very boldness of this act was its best warrant of success. The Jackson Street disguiser of crooks was clever, and the shrewdest detectives who had been put on the job to find the escaped convict did not suspect that the darky they kept brushing against was a white man and the very one they were in search of; least of all would they seek to find the man under the very roof of the Armytage mansion, clad in a natty, brass-buttoned uniform, answering to the name of Sam, blacking his master's boots, running on his errands, and accompanying him on his walks.

Thus the day for the trial drew nearer and nearer and finally dawned. The courtroom was packed with the *élite* of society, come to see the trial of one of their own set, though every one knew that the outcome was practically a foregone conclusion. Gladys and Alicia, escorted by the Marquis, occupied prominent seats and were much gazed at and commented upon by the audience. Far in the back, near the door, sat Agnes Merrihew. She had crept in unobserved, and, though she saw Gladys, made no effort to approach her. She sat there with hands clasped and a tense expression on her face, watching

the door through which the accused was to enter the courtroom.

The entrance of the District Attorney with some of his associates created a stir; there was a sudden sitting up and a murmur of expectancy on the part of the audience. This was followed by the crier rapping his desk and calling out:

"His Honor the Recorder!"

Every one stood up and remained standing in a respectful attitude until the magistrate had ascended the bench and bowed to the audience. There was a moment's bustle while seats were being resumed, then in a clear tone of voice the Recorder said:

"There will be no call of the calendar to-day. All cases stand adjourned until to-morrow except that of the people against Harold Armytage, in which, I understand, both sides are ready. Call the prisoner."

"Harold Armytage to the bar!" called out the crier.

The side door opened and from an adjoining room in which he had been waiting Harold entered the courtroom, followed by Mr. Carruthers and the junior counsel.

A murmur of admiration ran through the crowded

room as Harold, without any theatrical posing, but wearing a look of fixed determination on his face, advanced and took a seat at the counsel-table pointed out by Mr. Carruthers. He smiled at his sister, gave Alicia a slight nod, and then his eyes roved around the room as if in search of some one else, finally resting on Agnes' bowed head, while a feeling of content and satisfaction was expressed in his face.

"I thought she would be here," he murmured to himself.

Beyond the first look she gave him as he entered, Agnes had not dared to meet his eyes.

"How handsome he is!" was the thought that surged in her fluttering heart; then she looked down on the floor and kept her eyes fixed there.

"Empanel the jury," ordered the Recorder.

The clerk began to call out the names, and both the prosecution and the defense accepted the first twelve men. There was no challenging on either side. After the jury had taken their seats in the box and had been sworn in, the rest of the panel was excused for the day; the actual trial was begun.

The District Attorney arose and gave a history of

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the case, then continued: "I understand, Your Honor, that there is no dispute as to the facts I have stated, and to expedite matters I ask the counsel on the other side if he will consent that a statement to that effect be entered on the minutes in lieu of my calling witnesses to prove the same."

"We consent, Your Honor," said Mr. Carruthers.

"Then that is the case of the people," said the District Attorney, and resumed his seat.

Mr. Carruthers then arose, and, addressing the court and jury, said:

"The facts as stated by the District Attorney are true and cannot be gainsaid by us. Our defense is that at the time of the commission of the alleged crime the prisoner was mentally and hence legally irresponsible for his actions."

A smile ran through the audience. The foregone conclusion was being put in evidence. If it were not one of their own set who was being tried for his liberty, they would have indignantly denounced it as a travesty on justice. Harold made a motion as if to rise and interrupt his lawyer, but the junior

counsel held him back, and on second thoughts he sank back in his seat, murmuring between his teeth :

“We will see.”

Mr. Carruthers then began a long biography of both the Armytage and the DePeyster families, starting as far back as Harold's great grandparents. He stated that he would show how the Armytages in England had had several weak-minded members of the family, who had been committed to various insane asylums; how the DePeyster who had led a regiment in the Revolution was known as “The Mad Colonel” on account of his hair-raising adventures; how there were several cousins more or less remote who were complete or partial idiots from their very birth, and so on in a similar strain. He next would offer proof that on a tiger-hunting trip in India the defendant had been attacked by a man-eating tiger, whose claws had lacerated his skull, causing the brain to be injured, and that this had been followed by a sunstroke in the Desert of Sahara which prostrated the defendant for several weeks. He would quote medical authorities of the highest standing to the effect that injuries to the brain were prolific causes of insanity, and that sunstrokes had sent more

people to lunatic asylums than any other one cause. He would put on the stand experts in alienism of world-wide reputation who would testify that they had personally examined and conversed with the defendant, and from such examination and conversation had come to the conclusion that he had been insane when he set free a convicted murderer, perhaps, to repeat his homicidal crime—nay, that he was still insane at this very moment!

“Ah!” breathed Harold heavily, as he now saw the full significance of the conversations these medical gentlemen had had with him. But he made no further effort to interrupt his counsel, only there was a brighter glitter in his eyes and a firmer clinching of his fingers.

Mr. Carruthers spoke for an hour and then sat down.

One of the junior counsel next arose and called as the first witness Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster.

The buxom widow, in an attire which, while undoubtedly a work of art, as was her complexion, could, like its fair wearer, speak for itself, made her way to the witness stand and gave a succinct history of all the DePeysters, dead and gone as well

as those still alive—a marvelous achievement, considering the fact that she had married into the family only a few years back. The District Attorney did not cross-examine her or Gladys, who was the next witness, and who testified to the history of the English Armytages, which she had looked into, she admitted, only since her brother's trouble.

We need not detail the evidence of the medical experts or give the long hypothetical questions read to them and which they were sternly requested to answer with a simple "yes" or "no." A second junior counsel read whole theses on brain diseases and sun-strokes from bulky volumes of medical lore, and by the time the District Attorney had put in a mild rebuttal of all this testimony and Mr. Carruthers had summed up for the defense and an Assistant District Attorney for the people, the jury was in such a state of mental confusion that they barely knew whether they were to bring in a verdict that the prisoner was insane or that they themselves were fit candidates for the lunatic asylum.

The Recorder's charge was very brief indeed. He simply put the entire responsibility on the jury,

which, after retiring for half an hour, returned with the verdict :

“Acquitted on the ground of insanity of the defendant !”

CHAPTER XX

LEGALLY INSANE

THERE was a stir in the crowded courtroom as the jury rendered its verdict, and all eyes were turned on Harold to see how he would take it. At the request of the Recorder he had stood up as the jury filed into the room and had remained standing as the verdict was announced by the foreman. The hectic flush on his cheeks deepened, his breath came harder and his eyes sparkled more brightly. These, with a spasmodic clenching of his right hand, were the only outward signs of the battle waging in his heart and which was soon to burst forth in a way little anticipated by either judge, jury or the spectators. He remained standing with his head bowed while the Recorder addressed him.

"Mr. Armytage," said His Honor, "the verdict of the jury places upon my shoulders a painful re-

sponsibility, yet not so painful a one as if I were obliged to sentence you to a term in State's prison. It is fortunate, too, for myself, that in all good conscience, I can heartily agree in the verdict. I have suffered some unmerited censure for my connection with this case. Henceforth I cannot be blamed for not being able to foresee the acts of a madman."

Harold made a motion as if to interrupt at this point, but, by a violent effort, controlled himself, and the Recorder continued :

"I knew your father well; he was a dear friend of mine. I have been a welcome guest at your house, have broken bread with you and have been honored and respected by your sister and your acquaintances. Though, even so, I should not have shrunk from any duty, no matter how unwelcome, imposed upon me; still, it is a matter of great relief and consolation that I am called upon only to pity, not to condemn you. By the evidence produced at the trial it was established that there is a hereditary taint of insanity in your family on both sides, which, while dormant under ordinary conditions, was likely to burst forth if any cause should arise to predispose it to do so. Such causes, according to the

expert testimony given and the authorities read, were the injury to your brain in India and the sun-stroke in Africa. With your brain weakened by these accidents, returning after years of absence to your native land, laboring under the emotions which such a return would naturally call forth, welcomed by your sister and those nearest and dearest to you, made a hero at a banquet in your honor, your mind was in a state, perhaps unconscious to yourself, to yield to the first call for an abnormal manifestation. Since the night I have in my mind, it has been a matter of deep regret to me that you ever permitted the holy representative of his church to enter the presence of yourself and your guests."

"You mean the Soggarth Aroon?" ejaculated Harold through his gritted teeth.

"I understand that this is the cognomen he is known by," rejoined the magistrate, "'The People's Priest.' Far be it from me to criticize one of his cloth; he undoubtedly deems that he is serving the Master in his own way; yet the Utopia he preaches will never be realized, and all that he can accomplish will be the breeding of discontent in the

hearts of the poor and the overturning of such brilliant but tottering intellects as yours."

There was a gleam of defiance in the Recorder's eyes as he uttered these words, for he noticed that the Soggarth Aroon had entered the courtroom just in time to overhear them. The good father made no attempt to create a scene by answering them, but, standing in the back near where Agnes was sitting, folded his hands in an attitude of prayer, while his lips kept softly murmuring pious admonitions.

"Like a spark to a train of powder," continued His Honor, "his grandiloquent phrases of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God set fire to your imagination. You felt that you must leave your surroundings of wealth and go down to the Tombs to commune with a common murderer. As I have already stated, I unwittingly gave you the opportunity to do so. I could not suspect any more than you could yourself that it needed only the pitiful tale you were likely to hear from the condemned prisoner to put you in a state of utter legal irresponsibility. All your acts from that moment were, as the jury properly found them, the acts of an insane person, harmless enough unless further

provoked, and subject to cure amid proper surroundings and under the ministrations of able physicians. Your counsel and your sister, I know, have taken measures in that direction, and the court is ready and willing to aid them. By virtue of my authority and in accordance with the verdict rendered in your case I commit you to the Flushing Sanitarium, there to remain until you are cured, when you may be discharged without further application to this court and without being put in jeopardy of your liberty on the charge for which you were indicted."

At the Recorder's last words two men in the uniform of the sanitarium stepped up and laid their hands on Harold's shoulders. With a growl like that of an enraged lion he shook them off and, gazing straight at the magistrate, cried:

"I demand my right—the right of an American citizen—to be heard why I should not be dragged off and put in a mad-house."

Then, without waiting for permission, he rapidly continued: "I have listened quietly to Your Honor's plea in justification of the judicial farce which has been enacted here to-day; now I expect that

Your Honor will listen to what I have to say in justification of my act."

These bold words sent a thrill of excitement through the courtroom, and all listened intently to what Harold would say next. Agnes rose to her feet as if to draw nearer, but sank back in her chair and put her trembling hand in that of the Soggarth Aroon, who placed his other hand on her head as if in benediction. Gladys and Alicia both approached the bar before which Harold was standing and ranged themselves on either side of him.

The silence in the courtroom was profound as, after an assenting bow from the Recorder, the young millionaire began his justification: "I have been adjudged a lunatic, Your Honor. If at the outset I felt inclined to protest against this whole proceeding I have no such desire now. Lunatics have privileges and immunities under the law denied to men of sound mind, and I have been placed in a position to take advantage of them. One of these immunities is that I can no longer be held legally responsible for any act of mine.

"You will give me credit," he continued, "that I have done nothing to aid my counsel to place me in

this position. He never consulted me as to the nature of my defense. I was unaware that the witnesses who testified here to-day had been sent by him to craftily examine and interrogate me without my suspecting it. If my sister, with Your Honor's acquiescence, has made preparations to have me taken from here to a sanitarium, it was done without my knowledge or consent."

"Oh, Harold!" interjected Gladys; "I did it for your own good."

"I know—I know," he rejoined, pressing her hand to reassure her, "but I am over twenty-one, fully able to mark out my own destiny, and willing to abide by the consequences of my actions."

He again turned to the Recorder and continued:

"It is true, as Your Honor stated, that the words uttered by the Soggarth Aroon at my house on the night of the banquet roused my soul out of its lethargy. It was a new baptism for me, although I did not recognize it until I was brought face to face with a victim of our unjust social conditions. I listened to his story and felt that I was at least partly to blame for the tragedy which had occurred and which he was to expiate in the electric chair. I

thought of the thousands and tens of thousands of his fellow workingmen, victims of their environment, some possibly more degraded than he, others a little better circumstanced, but all deprived by us, who receive what we do not earn, of their rightful wages, which means to them, to their wives and children, better food, better lodging, better raiment, education, enlightenment, civilization, happiness." He paused a moment, for he had become breathless in his eloquence, and there was a painful stir in that fashionable audience, who had never heard such sentiments uttered before. A tear glistened in Agnes' eyes, while the Soggarth Aroon under his breath murmured:

"Good!"

"I pictured to myself," continued Harold, "what I should have become were I born and brought up like Jack McQuillan, and I felt, in my heart, that such a rage against existing conditions would have seized me that I should have been tempted to tear them asunder with a dynamite bomb if necessary; in a word, I should have become an anarchist."

"I cannot permit you to continue in this strain,"

interrupted the Recorder. "Such language is unheard of in a court of law."

"Excuse me, Your Honor," retorted Harold. "I am insane, you know, and cannot be held liable for my words. But let me continue: The putting myself in his place mentally induced the thought of doing so actually. What followed you know. You will never electrocute Jack McQuillan, and, as for me, if you had sentenced me to a term in prison I would have submitted, regarding it as a penance for my idle past and as a preparation for my future, which I here and now consecrate to the service of those whose hearts are heavy-laden, who are my brothers, all children of our common Father. But I repudiate the stigma that my acts were but the promptings of a distorted mind. It is all of you who are mad, not I! By the God above me, I am the only sane man in an insane world!"

"This is too much," declared the Recorder, losing his patience; "you are raving now. Officers, see that he is taken to the asylum. The court stands adjourned."

The attendants of the sanitarium, reinforced by several policemen, advanced to obey the court's di-

rections, while Gladys and Alicia tearfully pleaded with Harold to quietly submit; but he violently pushed the men away from him.

"Back!" he exclaimed. "I shall walk out of this courtroom a free man. Who dares to lay a hand on me will receive a bullet in his heart! I have been declared insane and may even murder with impunity!" As he spoke he drew forth a revolver and pointed it at the Recorder himself.

CHAPTER XXI

THE NEW HAROLD

HAVING reduced every one in court to a state of abject terror, Harold, still brandishing his weapon, strode hastily out of the room and into the street. As he passed out of the building the court officer and the asylum attendants regained their lost courage and made a dash after him. In the street were two equipages, each drawn by a team of powerful horses. One was the regular coach from the Flushing Sanitarium, a sort of vehicle resembling a prison van, with its slatted windows and door bristling with bolts and bars; the other the Armytage carriage which had brought Harold and Gladys to court. On the box of the latter sat the family coachman and Sam, Harold's negro valet and body-guard.

Harold lingered at the entrance to the court to

await his sister's coming, and, also, it must be confessed, to get another glimpse of Agnes. In fact, it was his intention to ask the latter and the Soggarth Aroon to accompany Gladys and him to their home. That lingering, however, was fatal to his plans. The minions of the law and of the asylum came rushing out and, noticing that he had lowered his revolver, sprang on him in a bunch. They succeeded in disarming him, and then a terrible struggle ensued. It was their purpose to force him into the sanitarium coach. Once inside of that, the door would be clapped shut and bolted and he would be completely at their mercy.

Harold suspected their design and kicked and struggled and fought to regain his liberty, while Agnes and Gladys, who had come out of the courtroom together, added their screams and tears to the general uproar. Alicia would have joined them, but she stood apart, pitying Harold, but gnawing her heart out with insane jealousy as she saw on what friendly terms Gladys and Agnes were.

"If she should prove to be my rival," she whispered, "heaven have pity on her, for I shall have none."

The odds against Harold were overwhelming. In spite of all his desperate struggles he was being dragged nearer and nearer the asylum vehicle. Already his assailants were chortling over their prospective triumph when he called out :

“Help, Sam!—help!”

There was a streak of black humanity in the air for a moment as the colored body-guard, with a bound, leaped from the box of the Armytage carriage and struck the pavement. The next instant two arms with muscles on them like those of a prize-fighter sawed the air in all directions, while two powerful fists kept ramming sledge-hammer blows on the bodies, heads and faces of the police and the attendants. It was all over in a few seconds and then the ground was piled up with sorely wounded men. Some had been put to sleep with a knock-out blow ; others were nursing broken heads, fractured noses or bloody jaws. Jack McQuillan’s giant strength which he had deplored had proved of good service in this case. Grabbing the now liberated Harold around the waist, he fairly lifted him from the ground, placed him in the family carriage, slammed the door shut, then, mounting the box,

snatched the reins from the coachman's hands and started the horses off at a gallop, amid the wild plaudits of the assembled crowd.

An hour later, Harold, showing no sign of the fracas through which he had passed, was calmly sitting in his library puffing a cigar and conversing earnestly with Gladys, Agnes and the Soggarth Aroon, who had arrived in a public conveyance. He was undisturbed by any court officer, policeman or asylum official the rest of the day, and, in fact, during any day thereafter; for a great revulsion of opinion in his favor had taken place. His bold words in court, the sentiments he had uttered, his brave fight for liberty, and the utter rout of the police, were talked about wherever men congregated, and the papers the next day devoted whole pages to the startling news. Overnight he became the hero of the people, the demigod of the workingman.

The papers, quick to recognize the temper of the public, advised the authorities that it would be best to leave the young man alone; they deplored his eccentricities, as they termed them, but thought that no good public end would be served by putting him into an insane asylum. Any effort to do so might



lead to bloodshed and riot, while, if he was simply ignored, his brief popularity would be dissipated by the next unusual occurrence in a big city where every day brings forth the unexpected. That this was deemed good advice was evidenced by the fact that the police department not only kept their clutches off Harold, but also called in the sleuths they had put on the trail of the fugitive Jack McQuillan.

The laboring classes—that is, the great majority of the population of New York—made Harold Armytage's future their own. The very next night a mass-meeting at the plaza in Union Square was attended by thousands. Fiery orators declaimed that a new Moses had arisen to lead the enslaved masses out of the land of bondage into the Canaan which was their rightful inheritance. They threatened that the least move made by the authorities to deprive their hero of his liberty would be met by an uprising of the common people such as the city had not witnessed since the bloody days of the Riot of 1863. They urged their auditors to form themselves into a political body, to hold a mass-meeting at Cooper Union and to formally tender the nomination for mayor to Harold Armytage. At the election which

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was to take place the following month he would be triumphantly elected over the candidates of both regular parties, and, at his inauguration on January 1st next, the millenium for the laboring classes would dawn.

Amid the wildest hurrahs and a hurricane of enthusiasm this advice was taken by the crowd. The Laboring Man's Party was organized on the spot, and a committee was appointed to wait on Harold Armytage to inform him that they would nominate him for mayor and to request him to deliver an address at the mass-meeting held by his adherents.

Two days later Harold received the committee at his residence. He listened to the address of the spokesman and could not forbear a thrill of pride at the evidence of good-will and appreciation implied in the honor tendered to him by the people whose champion he had determined to become.

Still, he considered it best to decline the civic crown thus offered him.

"If I refuse," he said, "to become your candidate for mayor, it is not because I do not fully appreciate the honor sought to be conferred on me, nor because I have any fear of defeat at the polls. If

the laboring classes are united, as you say they are and as they ought to be in the protection of their own interests and the enforcement of their undoubted rights, no merely political party can withstand them. They are the most numerous of the body of our citizens, and their united votes are sufficient to win the victory at any election."

"And yet, recognizing all this, you still decline to run for mayor, to the great disappointment of the thousands for whom we speak?" asked the chairman of the committee.

"I am but the merest neophyte in politics," replied Harold. "If elected I would either find it impossible to accomplish your desires or perhaps be made a victim of political tricksters, who would know how to pull the wool over my eyes. In either case the disappointment of my fellow-partisans would be greater than it will be by my declining to be their candidate. I think well of your going into politics and will support the movement, both morally and financially, to the best of my ability; but I beg you to nominate for mayor some good man who knows something of practical politics and who has

studied, to a greater extent than I have, the political issues involved in the great labor question."

"Must we so report to the mass-meeting?" disappointedly asked the spokesman.

"If you will permit me," said Harold, "I will go to the meeting and make the report myself. I will tell my brothers and comrades why I cannot be their candidate and will outline to them the plan for my immediate future, which I have determined upon after earnest and careful consultation with the good Soggarth Aroon."

He was as good as his word. That night, a week later, he stood on the platform in the large hall in the Cooper Union, and waited, apparently in vain, for the enthusiasm of the thousands there assembled to die down sufficiently to make himself heard. Again and again he waved his arms for silence and attempted to speak, but his voice was drowned in the tumultuous shouts of the multitude hailing him as their deliverer and emancipator from industrial slavery. It was an ovation of which any man might well be proud, and his manly bosom heaved with strong emotion and tears came to his eyes as he felt that already he was sufficiently rewarded for any-

thing he might do in the future to open the door of opportunity to those now vainly beating there for entrance.

The Soggarth Aroon, seated in an arm-chair, shared his emotion ; for these people were his people, his flock who had followed him out of the church at whose altar he was no longer permitted to minister, and who gathered there every Sunday evening to listen to the living truth as it issued from his lips. He, too, received a similar ovation every Sabbath, and he was glad that the plaudits should ring forth for one whom he considered his dearest and best beloved disciple.

“My friends, my brothers,” began Harold, as soon as he could obtain even partial quiet, “this reception is indeed flattering to me, yet I value it more highly because I take it to be an expression of faith and hope in the great cause of industrial emancipation, which inspires our words and actions.”

In clear, ringing tones which made themselves heard throughout the vast hall, he went on with his speech. There were some groans of disappointment and violent protestations as he gave his reasons why he could not accept their nomination for mayor, but

his cogent arguments soon won over the objectors, and thereafter he was listened to with rapt attention, broken only by prolonged applause at the end of some period marked by the eloquence of earnestness and conviction.

He spoke for almost an hour, covering nearly every phase of the labor question and showing that the root of the evil was in the relation of employer and employee. He declared that no man was justly entitled to a larger share of the profits of a business than he earned, and no man should be satisfied with less.

"I will give an example to the world," he said, as he concluded, "of a business without a boss, where every one, from the highest to the lowest, are partners, each one receiving the full share of the value of his labor, where co-operation shall take the place of compulsion, and industrial slavery be unknown. To bring this plan to a successful fruition I dedicate to it the millions I possess, and every fiber of my body and every power of my brain. I call upon you to give three cheers and a tiger for the Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company!"

Then bedlam was let loose!

CHAPTER XXII

A MARRIAGE IN SOCIETY

HAROLD lost no time in setting his project into operation. At the very outset he realized that the present works would be unavailable for an establishment such as he had in view. He proposed first of all to call back the strikers and make them his partners. This he knew would be extremely distasteful to Silas Chubb, the present manager, who would, for other reasons as well, not care to have anything to do with a scheme he immediately stigmatized as revolutionary, socialistic and anarchistic. Harold, on his side, was perfectly willing to dispense with his services, as also with the services of the "scabs" who had taken the strikers' places. He considered that the best plan would be to sell the works and build new ones with his share of the money so realized.

There was an added reason why he determined to do this, and that was to hand over her inheritance to Gladys on her wedding day. He felt he had no right to risk her money as well as his own in the undertaking, and, besides, he knew that the Marquis de Belle-Riviere expected his bride to come to him with her full dowry. On mentioning this matter to Gladys he discovered that she had similar views. She did not try to dissuade him from making an attempt which must have appeared to her as more or less visionary, and she sincerely wished for its success; but she gave him to understand that she, too, had plans which she had talked over with her future husband. She would devote her inheritance to the reconstruction of the Belle-Riviere château on the Rhône and the hotel in the Faubourg Saint Germain, and as the wedding was fixed for the beginning of November, scarcely a fortnight hence, she hoped that Harold would by that time have found a purchaser for the works able and ready to pay the price in cash.

At a moderate valuation the works and good-will of the business were worth four million dollars. Where would he find an individual or a corporation

with that amount of funds available for such a large transaction? In this dilemma Harold was extremely gratified when Silas Chubb came forward and announced that he would find the man and the money within twenty-four hours.

"It's dirt cheap at the price," he said, in his oily way. "I can form a corporation to buy you out in twenty-four hours, and I should be expected to be elected president of such a corporation. Of course, it would be even more valuable to us if you would take your money as your sister will take hers, and spend it abroad on your own pleasure in steam yachts, fine pictures, or anything you please except to found this co-operative establishment. There will be two manufactories where now there is only one, and we will necessarily compete with each other. But, then," he added with a sly chuckle, "competition is the life of trade. You are not afraid, my boy, of meeting us on the same field?"

"Not in the least," Harold assured him. "It will, in fact, be an excellent test. You with your old-style way of doing business and I and my co-laborers working according to the new method. I ask but a fair field and no favor, and may the fittest survive."

"Amen to that," declared Silas.

And so it was settled.

The very next day the United States Printing Press Company was organized in Wall Street with a capitalization of thirty millions, divided equally between preferred and common stock. In the prospectus issued to prospective stockholders it was stated that the object of the corporation was to purchase the Armytage Printing Press Works and to buy a majority of the stock of other printing press companies, of which it would be a sort of holding company. In plain words, it was to form a printing press trust, though at that time the trust idea was only beginning to spread out its tentacles in the commercial world and was not yet called by that name. Nevertheless, the gigantic economic combat about to be instituted with millions at stake was between the trust principle and the co-operative principle, by whatever name it was called.

It took some time for both Harold and Mr. Chubb to formulate their respective plans and to have all the legal technicalities attended to, with the result that Gladys' wedding eve had come when Harold re-

ceived two checks of two million dollars each, one for himself and one for his sister. He handed Gladys' check to her with a fraternal kiss and a wish for her and the Marquis' future happiness. She endorsed it and at once passed it over to the Marquis, who, with Mrs. Van, was present on this interesting occasion. The Frenchman, with a thousand protestations against this act of generous self-abnegation, pocketed the check with an almost audible sigh of satisfaction, while Mrs. Van's eyes gloated as she mentally figured out how much five per cent. of two million dollars would amount to.

Ring out the joy-bells, for this is Gladys' wedding-morn!

A bright sun rose in a cloudless sky, a harbinger of the sunshine that was to flood the glad November day. Happy is the bride that the sun shines on, so runs the old adage, and if it is a superstition, Gladys hugged it to her heart as she rose at an early hour from her couch and ran to the window to gaze at the orb of day.

"I will be happy—I will be happy!" she kept murmuring to herself, as if the repetition of the words

would realize the wish in her heart. "I have all that a girl can crave—youth, beauty, fortune, a lover who lays at my feet the keys of his ancestral domain, who will make me a Marquise to-day and a Duchess hereafter, and who crowns me with the glory of the name of Belle-Riviere. I have all—save love. Oh, why is it," she cried, springing to her feet from the ottoman on which she had been sitting, "that I have no love to give him in return? He is manly; he is handsome as men go; he is far superior in culture and refinement to the average American; he is a man of the world in the best sense of that term, and yet I do not feel my heart thrill at a glance of his eye or the touch of his hand."

She remained sunk in deep reflection for some moments, then communed again aloud with her thoughts:

"Perhaps I am mistaken in my ideas of love, ideas imbibed from what I have read of 'the master passion' and from what my girl friends have told me. It may be to some a seething whirlwind of bliss; to others like the gentle dew which bathes and beautifies a flower, yet leaves its petals calm and unruffled. If to like a man is to love him, then I can

honestly proclaim at the altar to-day that I love Etienne. Perhaps that is all my nature is capable of. God grant that it is so; God grant that I may never live to see the day when I shall feel that I have bartered myself and my fortune for rank and title!"

With an effort she put these conflicting thoughts out of her mind and rang for her maid to begin her bridal toilet.

The wedding was set, according to canonical decree, at high noon and was to be celebrated at Grace Church, then the most fashionable in the city. Invitations had been spread broadcast among Gladys' friends and acquaintances in society. The bride felt that this was due to the honor of the families of Armytage and DePeyster from which she was descended. The invitations were eagerly accepted by those who received them, for it was not given to them every day to witness a real live Marquis espouse a fair daughter of Columbia. Etienne had only a few friends of his own from the French quarter to invite; none of his titled acquaintances abroad crossed the ocean to be present at the ceremony.

The church was crowded when the hour for the

marriage struck, and all eyes were turned toward the entrance as the bridal procession walked up the center aisle to the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March played on the organ. Mr. Silas Chubb and Mrs. Chubb, as the oldest friends of the family, headed the march; next came Mrs. Van Courtlandt DePeyster, walking alone, as the matron of honor; and then the bride, leaning on her brother's arm.

Like a queen by right of royal birth, Gladys walked proudly and with a firm step up the aisle to the altar. Having fought the battle in her heart that morning in her room, there was no faltering now. Regally magnificent she looked, her tall, supple form clad in white satin, the long train of which was upheld by two young lads attired as pages. A wealth of diamonds glittered on bosom and neck, and a tiara of purest gems fastened to her head the bridal veil of priceless lace, which she disdained to have cover her countenance. The spectators noticed how gloriously beautiful she looked in spite of the pallor of her face.

Following them came the two bridesmaids. Alicia had solicited the honor; it had been thrust on Agnes by Harold's express wish and Gladys' almost posi-



tive demand. In vain the young girl protested that she had forever bid farewell to scenes of festive gayety and that she had no clothes fit for the occasion. Both objections were overruled, and she was obliged to submit. When Alicia heard who her companion was to be she felt like surrendering the position she had craved, but she was afraid to create a scene and determined to render her fellow bridesmaid insignificant by the gorgeousness of her attire, which was second in brilliancy and cost to that of the bride alone. Agnes was clad in simple pink, with not a jewel on her person, but those who saw her were ready to declare that her ethereal style of beauty needed no other adornment. To Harold, who had seen her hitherto only in black, the change in her appearance seemed marvelous. In his eyes she looked more than ever like an angel.

At the chancel the groom stepped forth from the vestry, accompanied by two friends, to receive the bride. Attired in conventional morning dress, the Marquis bore himself as befitted his noble house and the dignity of the occasion. If looks went for anything the two were a well-matched couple.

The bishop himself officiated at the ceremony; the

responses were given by both the bride and groom in a clear, loud voice, and, before many minutes had elapsed, the two were solemnly declared man and wife.

To the strains of the bridal chorus in Lohengrin the procession made its way down the aisle, Gladys now leaning on her husband's arm, while Harold gallantly escorted Mrs. Van. At the church door they were overwhelmed by the congratulations of their friends, until they were hurried away to the Armytage residence, where a sumptuous wedding breakfast awaited the guests. After the reception, Gladys made a hasty change from her bridal finery to a traveling costume.

The Marquis and Marquise de Belle-Riviere left by the steamer that sailed at four that afternoon for the shores of *la belle France*.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DECLARATION OF A NEW INDEPENDENCE

THE day after Gladys' wedding two events of prime importance took place. The first was the laying of the corner-stone of the edifice which was to be the home of the Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company, and the second, the holding of the mayoralty election in the city of New York. The first was to typify the dawn of emancipation from industrial slavery, the second, the rending of the shackles of political serfdom which the citizens of the great city had themselves bound around their necks by abject subservience to boss rule and by the election of unworthy candidates to public office.

Harold had called a meeting of all his former employees and had laid before them his plans and purposes and received their unanimous approval. A

large plot of ground had been purchased in the suburbs of the city, north of the Harlem River, on which were to be erected one or more factory buildings, surrounded by small parks. The rest of the available space was to be devoted to the building of homes for the workingmen. With plenty of fresh air, and amid the delightful scenes of the country, the men would work and their families live in a better, purer physical and moral atmosphere than when pent up in the congested districts of the city.

One building was to be erected first, and additions were to be made as the business increased and expanded. This building was to be a model factory in every sense of the word. The health and comfort of the workingmen were to be the first consideration; every labor-saving appliance was to be made use of, for as the men were to share in the profits, it was no hardship, but a benefit to them, to have as much of the actual hard labor as possible performed by machinery. The hours of work were to be regulated by the character of the employment rather than the endurance of the men. For those working in the open air and at easy manual labor and congenial tasks, eight hours would be assigned

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as a day's work, and these hours would be shortened as the work grew harder, more confining or necessarily done in the blast-room of the foundry. It was deemed sufficient for a man to work in the foundry from seven to ten in the morning, then rest until three in the afternoon and work from that time till six.

Besides these essential features, the factory was to contain many of the comforts and conveniences which had been instituted by the elder Armytage in his works—baths and free medical attendance, a school of technology, and lectures on subjects of interest not only to the workingmen themselves, but also to their families. For this purpose the entire upper floor of the factory was to be fitted up as an assembly-room, with a well-appointed stage, on which occasional dramatic performances and concerts could be given for the amusement and entertainment of all.

Such in brief was an outline of Harold's plan for making work what it should be—a pleasure and a blessing, instead of the curse it is. Many of the details were suggested by the Soggarth Aroon and Agnes, who, with Harold, formed a sort of advisory

committee. The young man had indeed rather peremptorily appointed Agnes his private secretary and had convinced her, who was only too willing to be convinced, that this, too, was a sacred mission for her. By removing the scene of her activities from the slums to the community of two thousand souls, which would spring up as an environment to the factory, she would be extending and widening the sphere of her moral influence. The Rev. Mr. Messenger himself advised her to accept the position, even though it would oblige her to take up her quarters elsewhere, and would restrict her visits to the rescue home. The generous salary Harold forced on her enabled her to secure comfortable board and lodging in a private family uptown, and every morning at nine she reported promptly for work at the office which Harold had established in the rear parlor of the Armytage residence.

He was a very busy man, with all his planning and making speeches in the campaign then waging hotly throughout the city, and, as Agnes was an expert stenographer and typewriter, he found plenty of work for her to do. So much so, that often he declared he could not spare her to return to her

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residence for her noon-day meal; instead he would order up a luncheon for two, which they would partake of in the private intimacy of the office; and then they would again take up their work, which had become to both a labor of love in more senses than they themselves suspected.

Thus time, fleeting for them on the gayest of wings, brought Gladys' wedding day and, on the morrow after, the laying of the corner-stone. Harold considered it an auspicious circumstance that it was set on the election day, which was to be of equal if not greater importance than his own undertaking. The two events were, in fact, different views of the same great object-lesson to be presented not only to this city and country, but to the whole world. He determined to make the most of it. A platform had been erected on the grounds, a band of music engaged, prominent speakers invited to deliver addresses, and a collation was to be served in a tent. The Soggarth Aroon was to invoke the Divine blessing on the undertaking, and to Agnes was accorded the honor of tapping the stone with a silver trowel. The newspapers treated the event as only second in importance to the elec-

tion itself; they urged their readers to vote first and then to take part in the exercises of laying the corner-stone for an enterprise which, if successful, would revolutionize the entire business methods of the world. They no longer spoke sneeringly of Harold, or intimated that he was still laboring under abnormal illusions. Some of the papers even went so far as to promise to purchase the first of his presses as soon as completed. It was a time when almost every paper was building for itself a huge edifice surmounted by a tall tower; circulations were expanding, and new presses of greater speed than those in use were a matter of prime necessity.

Only one person in all the city looked on Harold's activities with an indulgent smile, such as we bestow on a child reaching out his little hand to grasp the moon. And that was Mr. Silas Chubb. He shook his head wisely, but gave no utterance to his thoughts, not even to his co-directors in the United States Printing Press Company. He himself stayed away from the exercises and positively forbade Alicia to attend, telling her that it would be indecent for any one of his family to participate in



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the founding of an establishment which was bound to be a competitor and rival to the corporation of which he was president.

Alicia was bound to submit under threat that disobedience in this instance would be followed by the cutting off of her allowance. She was ready to eat her heart out with rage when she read in the papers the next day the prominent part Agnes had taken in the exercises. Had she been present, she would doubtless have been given the silver trowel to wield and would have cherished it as a priceless souvenir. She raged at her father, at her wealth, at her social standing, which made it dishonorable to do any kind of work. She wished that she had been poor like Agnes; she would then have been Harold's private secretary, as Agnes was, and she, not Agnes, would have had the sweet privilege of spending hours in his company every day. And so she raged and fumed all day, and made everybody about her, herself included, wretched and unhappy, and ever the burden of her bitter thoughts was Agnes—Agnes.

Though in November, the day was bright and pleasant and it was no hardship to be out of doors. An audience that numbered over a thousand per-

sons, was gathered at the appointed hour of two in the afternoon around the stand, listening to the patriotic airs with which the band opened the proceedings. Then came the invocation of the Soggarth Aroon, followed by a number of prominent speakers on the subjects of "Industrial Slavery," "Capital and Labor," and "Co-operation." Agnes, at a signal from Harold, next stepped forward and blushingly acknowledged the rounds of applause with which she was welcomed. With the miniature silver trowel she tapped the stone suspended near her from a crane and declared that it was "square and on the level." The stone was then lowered into the excavation which had been dug to receive it, and handy artisans, with mortar and trowels, soon completed the work assigned to them.

After the band had played a lively tune, Harold stepped forward and received the ovation which had become the customary greeting extended to him on his public appearances.

"Fellow laborers," he said, when finally he could make himself heard, "the simple act of laying the corner-stone of a building which you have witnessed here to-day is an epoch-making act, the benign in-

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fluence of which will spread, like waves of the ocean, in ever-increasing circles until it encompasses the whole earth, enfolding all humanity in one embrace—the embrace of fraternal love.”

A round of applause greeted this expression of sentiment, and then he continued to give in detail the plans we have already outlined.

“We believe,” he added, “and we are warranted in our belief by the experience of co-operative undertakings in Europe, and especially in England and France, that in spite of the fact, or, I should rather say, because of the fact, that there will be no boss to command and no industrial slaves to abjectly obey, that love for the work will replace fear of dismissal; that hours will be less and each man’s distributive share of the profits greater than his ordinary wages—I say that, in spite of, or by reason of, all these things, the Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company will put on the market a better press and sell it at a cheaper price than the Armytage Works ever did. We hope to have the building constructed in six months, and the first presses ready for sale and delivery three months later. During this time of necessary waiting all the men who are co-operating

in this undertaking can draw on the treasury for such sums as will meet their wants, to be accounted for when the first profits are distributed."

It is needless to state that the offer was accepted with unbounded applause by the listeners, who had never before heard of a workingman being paid waiting time.

"We will now close," concluded Harold, "with the benediction by the Rev. Mr. Messenger and the singing of the 'Star Spangled Banner.'" Every head was uncovered while the clergyman uttered the benediction, and then the national anthem was sung with a fervor never before heard.

It seemed like the declaration of a new independence.

CHAPTER XXIV

DRIVEN TO HER DOOM

THAT same night, when the election returns were canvassed, it was discovered that the entire ticket of the Laboring Man's Party had been overwhelmingly defeated. In spite of the crowds and the enthusiasm at their mass-meetings, in spite of the orators' earnest pleas to the workingmen to stick together, in spite of the heroic work done by Harold Armytage and the lavish expenditure of his money, the candidates for mayor and for all the other offices were buried beneath an avalanche of adverse votes. Once again it was shown that the common people could not be made to unite politically for their common interests, and that they would persist in splitting their votes and their strength between the two regular parties, to their common undoing.

It was a bitter disappointment to Harold when the

news of the rout was brought to him. He had nothing to gain personally by the election, but he had hoped that the returns would show that the people had awakened to a sense of their own power.

"The time is not yet ripe," he said to the Soggarth Aroon, who was present at his residence and condoled with him. "It will need years and years of agitation and education to impress upon the masses the lesson that no one can help them unless they help themselves. Let us hope that the object lesson I am giving will be more readily understood by them. They are indeed lost if they are as blind to economic truths as they seem to be to their political rights."

"We must not despair," consoled the good father, "but keep on preaching the truth that is in us until it is triumphant. Justice and Right may lose battles, but must in the end win the war for those on whose side they were enlisted."

Equally disappointed, if not absolutely disgusted with the result of the election, was Mike Dempsey, the district leader and head of the clan of the Jacksonians. He had done yeoman service for "the organization" during the day. He and his lieuten-

ants had slugged and sandbagged more citizens who came to the polls to vote the labor ticket than they had ever done at any previous election. He and his gang had spread such a reign of terror through the district that hundreds of voters had actually been afraid to approach the polls, preferring a lost vote to a broken head or a fractured jaw. He had indeed carried his district by a large plurality, but the vote here, as well as in other downtown districts, had been swamped by the tremendous pluralities of the uptown wards.

He was voicing his disgust to a coterie of his cronies, as, with a glass of whiskey in his hand, he stood leaning against the railing of the bar in his favorite saloon.

"Say, wouldn't it give yer a pain in ther side?" he said, after gulping down the fiery liquid and refilling the glass from the black bottle at his elbow. "Dis thoid party movement jest makes me sick. Wot did dey gain by it, 'cept puttin' out of office deir own best friends an' puttin' in a lot of silk-stockin's an' representatives of Wall Street wot don't know nawthin' an' don't want to know nawthin' about deir interests. Say, d'ye s'pose dem Fifth Avenoo dudes'll

come down here to bail a man out when he gits pinched, or hold up a dispossess when he ain't got no money fer ter pay ther rent, or put him on ther big pipes if he's out of work, or get him half a ton of coal when he's freezin'? Of all ther chumps, the workin'man's ther woist ter go and cut der t'roat of his best friends like dis! If deir leaders had gone to see der 'old man' an' asked for an alderman or two, or for an assemblyman, or for some nice plum fur demselves, he'd 'a' fixed it all right, all right. No; dey wants der hull earth wid a garden 'round it—dey must have der mayor an' all der odder offices, an' what does dey git?"

He left his hearers to suggest the answer while he took another drink.

"Say, cullies," he then continued, "dis 'lection knocks me out fur good an' all. Even if I did carry me districk, I'm not in it any more. I couldn't get yer a job as a dorg-catcher ef I wuz ter go down on me knees fur it. I know how it is in politics. I'll be trun down in all de departments. I never had no show wid de mayor, anyhow. He allus put on a bluff fur form's sake, yer know, and de odder blokes wot runs de departments 'll now go in fur what

dey calls retrenchment an' reform, so's ter keep deir bloomin' necks from der axe when der new administration comes in. Mike Dempsey," he added, with a peculiar sort of political pride, "has never asked a favor in his life; he's allus demanded it. I'm done wid politics."

"What'll yer do fur a livin', Mike?" interestedly asked one of his hearers.

"I've got a little pile laid aside," vouchsafed the leader; "not much, fur I've been liberal wid der gang, yer know, an' blew in me dough like a gentleman; but I've got enough fur a starter. I'm t'inkin' of openin' up a dance-hall. I know a daisy place right 'round ther corner in der Hook, wot I've had me eye on fur some time. Fust it wuz a private house, den it wuz turned into a warehouse; but fur more'n a year it's been standin' empty, an' I can get ther lease of it fur a song, an' no questions asked. Der front 'll do fine for a barroom—der back fur ther dance-hall—an' I kin have ther upstairs rooms fixed up fur gents as'd like a little game on ther quiet. Say, cullie, when ther tide's in and der cellar fills up with water ter a depth of over ten feet, a bloke wouldn't have much show fer his life if he

accidently fell inter dat cellar some fine night—eh?” The thug winked his eye and leered at his companions, who all winked their eyes and leered at him in return.

“Dere’s a barrel of money ter be made in runnin’ dat shebang,” he went on, full of his nefarious plan, “an’ ther cops ain’t goin’ ter do nothin’ ter Big Mike, who’s done many a trick fur dem. All I wants is a Moll ter start it off with. Dere’s nothin’ like a woman behind der bar ter draw trade. I have a gal in me mind’s eye. I know just where ter lay me hands on her, an’ she’ll have ter come wid me or I’ll know de reason why.”

The girl he referred to was poor Maggie.

The very next day he wrote her a letter addressed to the rescue home and marked personal.

Maggie received it, and, opening it, read as follows:

“DEAR MAG: I know I done yer dirt, but I rite dese few lines fur ter let yer know how sorry I am an’ ter tell yer dat I stan’ reddy, at enny place an’ enny time, ter do der right t’ing by yer. Yer kin have der Soggarth Aroon or any odder priest yer

may name ter tie der knot, or yer kin sho dis letter ter der minister wot runs der home an' ask him fur ter do it. Dat shows I mean der strate goods, an' when yer kin look der woild in der face agin, bein' as yer'll be lawfully an' legally married ter me, yer kin den live wid me or not whichever yer t'ink best. I'll call at der home dis evenin' fur me answer, which I hope 'll be fav'rble, fur I luv yer, Maggie, wid me hull heart an' soul.

"Yours till deat',

"MIKE."

Maggie was suffering from an attack of homesickness and depression of spirits when she received this letter. Agnes had not been to the home for nearly a week, and she missed her greatly. The girl, accustomed all her life to live more in the freedom of the streets than in a house, felt confined and like one in jail, between the four walls of the home. True, she was kindly treated, yet she pined for liberty without daring to ask for permission to leave even for a few hours. She knew from Harold that her brother Jack, in disguise, was a servant in his house, but he had not come to see her, Harold thinking it

best to avoid the scene which would ensue at the meeting of brother and sister. She longed to see him now, and also Agnes, and ask their advice about the letter. All day long she went about with the note stuck in her bosom, hoping that at least Agnes would visit the home, but she did not come. Evening set in, supper was served, and the time for Mike Dempsey to come for his answer was near at hand when the distracted girl finally showed the letter to Mr. Messenger.

That gentleman read it very carefully. He had very strict notions on the subject of woman's honor, and believed that it was best for a woman to wear the wedding ring of the man who in all good morals ought to be her husband, even if he was a worthless scoundrel.

"My dear child," he said in his kindly, fatherly manner, "I, too, wish that Agnes were here to counsel you. The best advice I can give you is to take the fellow at his word when he arrives. I will perform the ceremony, and, once you are his wife, the stain on your good name will be removed. Then you can decline to live with him. This home will

always shield and protect you as long as you desire to remain within its walls."

Maggie thanked him for his good advice and kissed his hand. A moment later, Mike Dempsey was announced and entered the office where they were. The rascal had gotten himself up specially for the occasion; instead of his usual loud, swaggering clothes, he wore a simple sack suit of a neutral tint, a white shirt with a black tie, and he flashed no cheap jewelry. With a contrite air and humble manner he approached Maggie and said:

"Seein' de gent, I s'pose yer've consulted wid him 'bout my letter. Wotever der verdick is I hopes you and der gent 'll believe that I wrote it wid honest intentions."

"That I am willing to believe," said Mr. Messenger, while Maggie clung to his arm, mute and trembling, "and I have advised Maggie to become your wife. I will perform the ceremony now."

"Dat's wot I call doin' der square t'ing," exclaimed the villain, secretly gratified. "An', Maggie," he added, taking her right hand in his, "I swear ter yer now dat yer'll never regret dis moment."

"I hope so, Mike," she murmured, but half convinced.

The ceremony took but a few minutes to perform, and Mike, receiving a plain band of gold from the clergyman, slipped it on Maggie's finger. "Now," he declared, "yer me wife, an' I'm goin' ter make yer happy fur life if yer lets me. Say," he added, as if struck by an afterthought, "wot's der matter wid us takin' a carriage an' goin' up ter Mr. Armytage's place, where, as I see in der papers, Miss Merrihew, der angel of der slums, is? Yer can surprise dem wid de good news an' yer kin stay dere till yer've learned ter trust me enough ter live wid me."

"Oh, if you would only take me there!" cried Maggie, clapping her hands with delight.

Mr. Messenger did not particularly fancy this suggestion, but Maggie was so taken by it that he could not bear to wring her heart with a refusal. He finally consented on condition that another girl in the institution should accompany them and bring back word of Maggie's safe arrival. This the villain readily agreed to, and a few minutes later a carriage had been summoned, good-byes had been exchanged, and Maggie was driven off to her doom.

CHAPTER XXV

DECOYED

GREAT was the consternation of Harold and Agnes on the following morning when Mr. Messenger, in a state of great excitement, burst in on them as they sat working in the rear parlor of the Armytage residence.

"Did Maggie get here last night?" he asked almost breathlessly.

"No," replied Harold; "did she leave the home to come to us?"

"Yes, with Mike Dempsey," groaned the clergyman.

"With Big Mike!" cried Agnes, springing to her feet in wildest alarm. "Oh, my God! how could you have let her go with that villain?"

Then the whole story came out, told with piteous self-deprecation by the distracted minister, of the

letter Maggie had received, the coming of Mike Dempsey, the marriage, and their subsequent leaving.

"Mike promised to bring her here," he abjectly concluded, "and I thought I could trust him if I put a third person in the coach to report Maggie's safe arrival to me. When the girl did not return last night I believed you had kept her over night; but when she did not show up this morning, I felt there was something radically wrong, and came hurrying here."

"That villain has both girls in his power," declared Harold. "We must immediately notify the police and move heaven and earth to find and rescue them."

He at once set about doing this, and also informed Jack McQuillan what had happened to his sister.

"Black Sam," as he was known about the house, swore a number of fierce oaths that he would get his sister back and kill the thug who had lured her away. Utterly regardless of his own personal safety, he rushed down to Jackson Street and inquired in all Big Mike's usual haunts. But his quest was in vain. No one had seen the leader of the Jackson-

ians since the day before, or knew what had become of him. The police, too, seemed to be unable to get on his track, and so the day and night passed by with poor Maggie still in the villain's toils, and her brother still searching for her.

The next day the search was equally fruitless, and nine o'clock that night found Harold and Agnes, after an all-day hunt, sitting dejected and discouraged in the parlor. A servant entered the room and announced that there was a ragged-looking small boy in the hall with a message which he said he would not deliver to any one but Mr. Armytage himself.

"It may be from Maggie!" cried Agnes, springing to her feet.

"Show the boy up at once," ordered Harold.

A moment later, a street-arab, one of the most precocious of his kind, entered the room, holding a folded paper in his hand.

"Be you Mr. Armytage?" he asked of Harold. "She said I wuzn't ter give dis note ter ennybody else."

"Yes, I am Mr. Armytage," said Harold, eagerly

holding out his hand for the missive. "You are right, Agnes, it must be from Maggie."

"I don't know if dat's her name," said the boy. "All's I know is dat I was a-playin' on der sidewalk down in der Hook in front of der old warehouse which we all t'ought wuz empty, when a winder wuz opened on der second floor an' a gal looks out t'rough der bars wot is across der winder. 'Hist! Johnny,' she says, callin' me; 'take dis note ter a man wot's named Harold Armytage an' he'll pay yer well fur doin' of it. For God's sake, take it! Wid dat she drops der note at me feet an' gives me yer address. An' here's de note. I hope's yer'll do der right t'ing by me."

"Here's a five-dollar bill for you, boy," said Harold, handing him the money and taking the note. "And heaven bless you for bringing it."

The lad stuffed the bill into his pocket, with a grin on his dirt-smutted face, which Harold and Gladys were too excited to observe, and muttered to himself:

"Dat's der second fiver. I'm playin' in dead luck ter-night."

Harold eagerly opened the note and read it aloud. It was as follows :

"DEAR MR. ARMYTAGE: Big Mike got me away from the home by a trick an' has brung me ter a empty house which I don't where it is. He's locked me and der girl wot wuz wid me inter sep'rate rooms on der second floor. I heard him say he wudden't be back till ter-morrow, so we girls is all alone. For God's sake, break in ter-night and rescue us. I'm writin' dis hopin' to t'row it out of der winder ter some boy who'll bring it ter yer. If yer get it der boy'll show yer der house. Fur de love of heaven, get me out.

MAGGIE."

Harold showed the note to Agnes, who declared it was in Maggie's handwriting.

"We must break into that house to-night!" she cried.

"So dat's der game, is it?" exclaimed the street-arab. "I t'ought der gal wuz in some kind o' trub-ble. Say, boss, I'll show yer der house an' help yer to break in an' get der poor gal out."

"Good boy!" declared Harold. "If we succeed

there'll be another bill coming to you, and this time it will be a ten-spot."

Whereat the grimy-faced youngster gave another grin.

"If we only had Jack McQuillan with us now," said Agnes.

"He said he wouldn't come back until he had found his sister," rejoined Harold. "There is no use waiting for him."

He grabbed up his overcoat and hat as he spoke, then, turning to the lad, added:

"Lead on, boy; I will follow you."

"And so will I," affirmed Agnes, donning her jacket and putting on her hat.

"You, Agnes!" exclaimed Harold.

"Yes. I am better acquainted in the slums than you are. In the dark streets down there you might be waylaid and sandbagged. Ruffians that they are, they know me, and will not harm you if I am with you."

"I t'ink der leddy's right," said the boy; "it's a tough gang down dere."

Harold did not further oppose her wishes, and the three left the house together. They took the



cars for downtown, the street-arab remaining on the platform, for the reason, as he said, "dat dey was too swell guys fur him ter be seen in deir company."

A transfer of lines brought them to the corner of Grand and Jackson streets, and, walking down that street toward the river-front, they soon reached Corlears Hook and the empty warehouse pointed out to them by the boy. No light appeared in any window; not a sound issued from the building; to all appearances it was absolutely deserted and uninhabited. The street, too, was in utter darkness, the lamp on the corner lamp-post having gone out, and not a wagon or a pedestrian was in sight.

"If Maggie knew we were down here," said Agnes, "how quickly she would come to the window."

"I suppose she is not even allowed a light," rejoined Harold. "Now, boy, help me batter in this door."

He put his strong shoulders to the double doors on the ground floor and pushed with all his might. The boy also gave a good shove, while Agnes looked on intently to note the result of their first effort.

The doors were of heavy wood without any glass panels, and, as they were presumably locked, it seemed very doubtful if anything could be accomplished in this way.

Yet at the first push they opened at once, swinging inward so violently that the force Harold had exerted sent him sprawling into the room.

Before he could arise a number of men pounced on him and pinned him firmly to the floor. The next instant the flame of a gas-jet flared up and he saw Big Mike standing over him, glaring at him.

When Big Mike found himself with the two girls in the coach, which was driven by one of his gang, he had no difficulty in reducing both to submission. He simply grabbed each by the throat and choked them into insensibility before they could utter a scream for help.

When the girls recovered consciousness they found themselves in an attic room in the old warehouse, so high up that their screams could not be heard in the street, and with the windows heavily barred so that they could not make their escape. By the light of a dimly burning candle they discov-

ered Big Mike sitting on a three-legged stool, which was the only bit of furniture in the room, calmly waiting for them to regain their senses, as they lay on the floor.

"So, gals," he said, when he saw them open their eyes in affright; "how d'yer like yer new quarters?"

Maggie sprang to her feet, while her companion was too frightened to move.

"Is dis der way ye've tricked an' deceived me, Mike Dempsey?" she cried indignantly. "Take back yer ring—I wudden't be yer wife now." She tore the ring from her finger and threw it at him.

"Very well," coolly replied the villain, picking it up and pocketing it, "I kin hock dis for a dollar, an' it's clear graft for me, seein' it wuz de bloke at der home dat gave it ter yer. Wife or no wife, here yer are an' here yer stays. I'm goin' ter turn dis place inter a dance-hall an' yer goin' ter be me Moll and help me run it, see? As fur you," he added, turning to the other girl, "I didn't expect to have yer on me hands, but yer'll come in handy, too."

He kicked a pile of straw from one side of the room into the center, saying:

"Sorry I can't give yese enny better lodgin' ter-

night, but yer kin lay down on dat straw an' make der best of it."

With a triumphant leer at his helpless captives he walked out of the room, carefully locking and bolting the door behind him. The girls screamed and pounded the door with their fists and rattled the bars at the window, but their puny efforts could not set them free, and their cries were unheard.

They spent a sleepless night, and in the morning Big Mike visited them again, bringing them a scanty breakfast. He warned them to make less noise during the daytime than they had during the night, threatening to thrash them within an inch of their lives if he heard any sound from their room. Thoroughly cowed and frightened, the two girls passed the day and the night sobbing and praying, with the one hope in their hearts that their friends would learn of their whereabouts and come to their rescue. They never saw Big Mike except when he came to bring them their meals, and then he was obdurate to all their pleadings for release.

On the third night of their capture Mike came to them with their supper and a brand-new scheme which he had hatched during that afternoon. What

was the use, he thought, of opening a dance-hall and trying to earn a living, however disreputable, when he could make a strike for a portion of the millions which, as he read in the papers, Harold Armytage was scattering among the poor? The fact of Maggie being in his power gave him just the opportunity he wanted for a successful piece of extortion.

"If yer don't like the idea of bein' der mistress of a dance-hall," he said to Maggie, "I'll give yer a chance ter get out. Here's a bit of paper and pencil. Write a note to Mr. Armytage, tellin' him to come here an' get yer."

"Do you really mean it?" joyfully exclaimed Maggie, taking the proffered paper and pencil.

"Yer'll write just what I dictates," he gruffly replied, pulling out a revolver, "or yer'll get a bullet from dis in yer brain."

In imminent peril of her life, and with the deadly weapon pressed to her head, poor Maggie was compelled to write the letter which Harold afterward received. When it was finished Mike read it over, declared it was satisfactory, and, putting it in his pocket, left the room, again locking and bolting the door, leaving poor Maggie more than ever distract-

ed at the thought that she was luring the kind gentleman, who had befriended her at the home, to his doom.

It was not difficult for Big Mike to find one of the tough juvenile specimens of the neighborhood who was willing for a five-dollar bill to deliver the note. He carefully drilled the boy as to what he was to say and do, and, as we have seen, the sharp little rogue followed out his instructions to the letter.

That was how Harold fell into the decoyer's trap.

CHAPTER XXVI

A NOBLE SACRIFICE

WHEN Agnes saw Harold fall into the trap prepared for him, she gave a scream and darted up the street to find a policeman, but she was not quick enough to make her escape. One of the ruffians rushed after her, and, catching her by the hair, dragged her back screaming and shrieking into the warehouse. Big Mike stepped out and looked up and down the street. No one had heard the noise or the screams—all was dark and quiet at that time of the night in that district of factories and warehouses. With a smile of satisfaction he closed the front doors and faced Harold, who was still being held down by his captors.

“What d’ye t’ink of yer position now, Mr. Mill-yunaire?” he sneeringly asked.

“What have you done with Maggie?” asked

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Harold in return, the thought of the poor girl's safety being uppermost in his mind in spite of his own danger.

"Mrs. Mike Dempsey, if you please," retorted the thug. "I don't permit no man ter be dat intimate wid me wife fer ter go an' call her by her Christian name. What I've done wid her ain't none of yer business, seein' as how she's married ter me; but I will say she's a pretty obedient wife, all the same, as yer can judge by ther letter she writ yer."

"You're a liar, Mike Dempsey," declared Harold, "and you know it. If Maggie wrote that letter she did so under compulsion and not of her own free will."

"P'raps yer right about dat," admitted Mike, with a grin, "but dat's neider here nor dere. I wants ter tell yer why I got yer down here. You mustn't go fer ter t'ink dat yer kin blow in yer millyuns an' be showin' partiality ter yer own peepul. *We* are der peepul! If dere's any money ter be divided, we wants our share."

"You are a set of thieves and robbers!" cried Harold indignantly.

"Will yer listen to dat, pals!" exclaimed the thug,

turning to his fellows. "Dere's de great champeen ot de poor and de down-trod, wot has his picter printed in de papers as de hero of de common peepul, callin' dem t'ieves an' robbers. Say, we orter soak him fur dat."

"I am not afraid of you," retorted Harold, "nor do I think that you or your gang intend to do me bodily harm. You have got me in your power in order to extort money from me. How much do you want?"

"Now yer shoutin'," said Big Mike, gratifiedly. "Dough if yer knew wot wuz healt'y fur yer, yer wudden't go callin' it by dat name. Why, yer said yerself on der platform, that youse an' de likes of youse never earned der millyuns yer had—dat dey were extorted from de necessities of de poor. Wot are yer, den, but an extorshuner yerself? However," he continued, "I'm not bandyin' enny words wid yer—it's de dough I'm after. We hear yer've sold yer bizness fur two millions; ten per cent. of what yer have, sez de Good Book, give unto de poor. We are de poor. Fork out \$200,000, an' yer a free man."

"Your demand is preposterous," declared Harold;

"but even were I willing to concede it, how is it possible for me to raise that amount at a moment's notice?"

"Oh, dat's easy," the thug assured him. "Here's dis young lady which I knowed when she lived in dis neighborhood. Dey calls her de angel of de slums. I'll keep her ter be my angel till yer comes back wid der cash. If yer don't show up in two days I'll put her in me dance-hall an'——"

"No more, you villain!" interrupted Harold, vainly struggling to free himself from his captors. "If I were at liberty, even for a moment, I would choke the dastard words down your throat."

"But yer ain't at liberty, yer see," chuckled the brute. "Here, jest look at dis."

He raised a trap in the flooring and in the opening thus made the river could be seen flowing into the cellar.

"De tide is in," he declared. "Dere's a good ten feet of water down dere. Wot's ter prevent me and my men from chuckin' yer down dat hole an' closin' der trap? Dat'd mean good-by ter you, an' dis gal'd be mine."

"Oh, Mr. Armytage—Harold! this is terrible,"

exclaimed Agnes, wringing her hands in agony. "Consent to his demands—I will not be afraid to remain here with Maggie. We will protect each other. Consent——"

"*Don't!*" cried Maggie, suddenly rushing into the room, "*consent ter nothin'; de cops are comin'!*"

"De cops are comin'!" The words struck terror to the souls of the men who were holding Harold. They let go of him, and he, springing to his feet, rushed to Agnes, drawing her into his protecting arms. A fit of violent rage seized Big Mike. He sprang at Maggie and caught her by the arm.

"Who let yer out, d——n yer?" he cried, with the snarl of a wolf. "How d'yer know der cops are comin'?"

"Me brudder Jack let me out," she replied, undaunted; "he got on yer trail an' spotted yer down here. He climbed up de rear of de house and wrenched one of de bars from de winder of me room. He den got in and broke open de door. I told him ter go fur der cops, while I cum down ter——"

"Die, curse yer—die!" shouted the thug; and before the horrified spectators could divine his act or

prevent it, he grabbed up the hapless girl and hurled her through the open hole into the deep, dark waters below.

There was one shriek which ended in a muffled gurgle, then the water closed over poor Maggie—and all was over.

So paralyzed were all by this brutal murder that they seemed rooted to the spot with horror. The weird silence which reigned was suddenly broken by a resounding crash, as the front doors, which had been simply closed, but not locked, were burst in with one powerful push and Jack McQuillan sprang into the room.

"Where's Mag?—where's me sister?" he cried, rushing toward Big Mike. The latter with a triumphant leer pointed to the open trap.

"Yer've killed her!" shrieked Jack; "an', by the God who made me, I'll kill you."

Big Mike tried to draw his revolver, but it was too late; those powerful hands, that had once before fatally gripped a human being, closed around the thug's neck.

"I didn't mean ter do der dago," gritted Jack, "but I do mean ter kill you."

No one attempted to interfere. The paralysis which had seized the witnesses of the first murder kept them spellbound spectators of the second crime. Big Mike turned black in the face and with his hands tried to wrench away the deadly grip from his neck, but all in vain; he was held as in a vise, while the clutch grew tighter and tighter. He twisted and squirmed, but could not free himself. His eyes began to bulge out from their sockets, and there was a peculiar hissing in his throat as he gasped for air. Froth gathered at his mouth, and his tongue protruded from his blood-flecked lips. His breast rose and fell convulsively; then he suddenly collapsed—and the deed was done.

Jack opened his hands, and the dull, inert mass that a few minutes before was a living man fell with a thud to the floor.

Like a wild beast, the murderer for a moment gazed at his dead prey, then, with a half inarticulate cry of "Maggie, oh, Maggie!" dived head foremost through the trap. There was a splashing of water, while those present held their breath with suspense, and then he reappeared, laboriously climbing up out of the trap, holding the dead, dripping form of his

sister in one arm. The water had washed the black stain from his face, neck and hands, and "Black Sam" had given place again to Jack McQuillan, the escaped convict wanted by the police for murder.

Gently as a mother lays down her babe to slumber, he stretched the lifeless form on the floor and knelt down beside it; then he lifted one arm and let it drop; it fell inertly to the side of the body; he raised the eyelashes, but there was no sight in the eyes; he put his head down on the still, cold breast, but there was no faintest beating of the heart.

"Dead, Maggie, dead!" he cried, bursting into tears and throwing himself prostrate over the body.

The steady tramp, tramp of marching feet now announced the coming of the police, and soon a squad of officers from the nearest precinct, headed by the sergeant, marched into the warehouse. So unnerved had the members of the gang become by the double tragedy that they had no courage left to attempt an escape. They all surrendered and submitted to be handcuffed.

"There's been bloody work, I see," said the sergeant to Harold, whom he knew by sight. "We came as soon as we could."

"A noble girl sacrificed her life for us," said Harold, pointing to Maggie's dead body; "and the man who put us in jeopardy of our liberty, if not our lives," he added, "lies dead there."

"But where's the black man who came to the station house to fetch us?" asked the sergeant. "I told him to wait until I could summon my men, but he dashed on ahead."

"I'm der black man," said Jack in a dull voice, raising his tear-stained face.

"Jack McQuillan!" cried the sergeant, recognizing him.

"Yes, der man yer lookin' fer—der murderer fur whom a t'ousand dollar reward is offered, dead or alive. Der money is yours, sergeant. Me sister Maggie is dead, an' I don't care to live no more. Big Mike killed her, an' I killed Big Mike. I never wanted to kill der dago, but I wanted ter kill Mike, an' I did. I'm booked fur der 'lectric chair fur good dis time, but I ain't makin' no squeal." He bent down and kissed Maggie's dead lips, then held out his arms for the handcuffs.

CHAPTER XXVII

A BATCH OF LETTERS

Havre, November 13th.

DEAR BROTHER: You will have received Etienne's cable announcing our safe arrival before you get this letter. We had a tempestuous voyage and were horribly delayed by tide and storm; the vessel got into port only last evening.

This was my first trip across the Atlantic, you know, and I must be a terribly bad sailor, for I was sea-sick practically all the way over. If this is the usual experience of brides, I wonder why they make an ocean voyage part of their honeymoon? With me it was a necessity, for Etienne was so very anxious to return to his native land. I recovered as soon as I set foot on land again, but I was a sick woman on board the ship, which kept rolling in the mountain-high waves in a way too awful to depict.

The first few days Etienne was more than gallant in his attention to my needs. He is an excellent sailor, and doesn't know what it is to suffer from *mal de mer*. Perhaps for that reason he later on lost patience with my constant state of illness, and having seen that all my wants were attended to, left me to the care of my maid, and spent most of his time on deck and in the card-room. Well, I cannot blame him. A woman, no matter how good-looking she ordinarily may be, is not a pleasant sight to contemplate when in the throes of sea-sickness; and no matter how angelic her disposition, she is apt then to be fretful and querulous. Which brings me back to my former question: Why cross the Atlantic on your wedding-trip?

Thank goodness, though, it is all over now. We are quartered in a comfortable hotel in the fashionable part of the city, where we shall remain a few days for me to recuperate, and then we will proceed to Paris. It is arranged that we will stay in Paris for about five weeks, so that our arrival at Belle-Riviere will be during the festivities of *Noël*, the French Christmas, which Etienne tells me is made much of in this country, especially by the

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peasants in the southern part of France. You know the château of Belle-Riviere is located on the Rhône, not far from the ancient town of Arles in the Midi. They say the climate is like that of our own Florida, and that there is practically no winter there. Well, we shall see. I hate the cold and the snow and the ice, and if we are to pass the winter on the Rhône, I hope it will be like one of our own southern seasons.

At the hotel we found awaiting us a courier from my uncle by marriage, the Duke de Belle-Riviere. He brought us a letter from the Duke. It may seem absurd in American eyes to despatch a letter with a messenger in these days of fast mail service, but that is strictly according to the etiquette of the *ancien régime*, one of the few upholders of which left surviving in Republican France is my noble relative. I think it is very nice, don't you? The Duke's letter was addressed to both of us; in it he called me his niece *bien-aimée*. He regretted that age and infirmity prevented him from flying on the wings of love to embrace the new daughter of the house of Belle-Riviere, and to welcome to France one who would shed luster on her adopted

country and make the glory of the family name more radiant in the future than it had ever been in the past. Rather grandiloquently put, wasn't it? He must be a courtly old gentleman. I am eager to see him—and to learn to love him. Etienne tells me that in spite of his eighty years the Duke is a fine, if venerable, specimen of manhood, rugged in physical strength, like some hoary old oak, and with a mentality which seems to grow keener as his inevitable end grows nearer.

I have written you a longer letter than I thought I would when I began, and I will close now with Etienne's greetings of fraternal affection, which he begged me to send, and my love to you and the quondam angel of the slums, your present stenographer, dear Agnes.

GLADYS.

P.S.—What is this terrible news that has been cabled over, and which I have just been reading in the papers? Your life and that of Agnes in danger—poor Maggie McQuillan dead, and her brother again a prisoner in the Tombs! Write me full details to my Paris address, which I enclose. Write at once and relieve my awful suspense.

Paris, November 20th.

DEAR HAROLD: While waiting for your answer to my first letter I must write you a few lines to tell you that I have completely recovered my health in the two days we have been in Paris.

Etienne is all that a wife can desire in her husband. He is in high spirits, laughs and sings the live-long day and would hug me every few minutes if I would let him. He is altogether a different man to what he was on board the ship, when I thought him somewhat neglectful to his bride of scarcely a week, or to the moping, *distrain* person he was during our stay at Havre. Is it because I am radiant with health and have recovered my good looks, and that his temperament depends on his wife's physical condition? If so I will have to add a petition for constant health to my evening prayers. Or is it because the air of Paris has gotten into his blood? They say that Frenchmen can no more exist out of Paris than a fish out of water. Is it so with Etienne? He has mapped out a program for our stay here, which includes some form of amusement or entertainment for every afternoon and evening for the whole five weeks. I will write

you the details after I have received your letter, for which I am so anxiously waiting. Love to Agnes.

GLADYS.

P.S.—Does Alicia come as often to the house as formerly? I presume not. If you see her kindly remember me to her.

Paris, November 27th.

MY DARLING OF A BROTHER: This is Thanksgiving Day with you, though the people here know nothing of such a holiday. But I am celebrating my own Thanksgiving for your good, long letter, which came as a Thanksgiving gift this very morning, as also the few lines from Agnes. I am going to answer her note (I don't call a dozen lines a letter), and give her a good scolding on account of the stilted style in which she addresses me. Suppose I am a Marquise, does that make me any less her former schoolmate or make her any less the dearest friend I have? I will enclose my letter to her in this one, and you shall be my courier to hand it to her, just in the style of the *ancien régime*.

Thank Heaven that you and Agnes came out of that terrible place in Corlears Hook alive. My suspense is relieved. Please do not try to be quite so quixotic in the future. Your life is dear to others, even if you yourself do not seem to value it very highly. You ought, however, to try to do something to save Jack McQuillan from his impending doom. If ever any villain deserved death, it was the scoundrel who murdered poor Maggie; only take a sister's advice and don't go changing clothes with Jack McQuillan again. It may seem more romantic, but you will accomplish more by appealing to the governor for clemency for the poor man. I am glad to hear that you have had poor Maggie's remains interred in Greenwood Cemetery and will erect a simple shaft to her memory. She practically gave up her life for your sake. Please have a rose-bush put on her grave in my name, to keep her memory green.

How can I begin to tell you where I have been during our week in Paris? Fortunately, you know the gay capital like a book, and therefore I need not describe the indescribable. We have been to the Louvre, to the Elysée, to Fontainebleau, to St. Cloud ;

we have paid our respects to the President of the Republic and to the American Minister; we have made visits to titled families in the Faubourg Saint Germain, and have received visits at our hotel; we have dined at Viviers and in the Quartier Latin; we have heard Patti sing and seen Sarah Bernhardt act; we have been to the Théâtre des Variétés, and have even taken a peep at the Moulin Rouge. In a word, we are leading a perfectly bohemian existence, and I must confess that I like it. As for Etienne, he fairly effloresces. He plunges into the gayeties of Parisian life with the avidity of a man reaching out for a drink of water after passing through the arid wastes of the desert. He is absolutely tireless, taking me with him from one place of amusement to another, then back to the hotel, where he leaves me to go to one of the many clubs of which he is a member, returning at day-break to breakfast and sleep until the afternoon, when he again goes through the same round. Remonstrance on my part is of little use. He tells me that we will have plenty of rest down there—meaning Belle-Riviere—and that we must make the most of the few weeks in

which we shall live instead of merely existing. I am afraid he is not cut out for a staid *pater-familias*.

To-night we go to hear a wonderful violinist, about whom all Paris has gone stark mad. He is a Hungarian who renders Liszt's Rhapsodies in a way that no one else has since the composer's time, and who gets everybody's feet in a mad whirl when he plays a *Czardas*. I wonder what impression he will make on me? I will let you know in my next letter.

GLADYS.

P.S.—No postscript this time, for a wonder.

Paris, December 6th.

DEAREST HAROLD: I've heard Czerny play no less than three times in one week; that is to say, as often as he has appeared. He is the Hungarian I wrote you about in my last letter. You must pronounce his name as if it was spelled Cherny; Etienne says it differs from a Russian name in that it begins with a sneeze instead of ending with one. For my part I think it is as romantic as the man himself. Figure to yourself, as they say in France, a man not above thirty and appearing even

younger, with his slim form and clean-shaven face, which bears an habitually melancholy expression, except when it is animated by the emotion of his playing; dark, soulful eyes whose glances complete the thrill his music awakens in your heart; a shock of black, curly hair, which gives something of a gypsy look to his features; there you have as near a pen-picture of Czerny as I can draw.

After the first night, when he played the Rhapsodie No. 2, I was as crazy as the rest; but, then, you know I always was music-mad. Etienne, who prefers Offenbach and Waldteufel, said it was very nice but rather monotonous, and when I asked him to take me to the two matinée performances that were to follow, he begged to be excused. He offered to procure tickets for me, and said it was the usual thing for ladies to attend the day concerts without an escort. So I heard the two other recitals alone. It is the first time that I have been alone at an entertainment. The impression created on me by the first concert was deepened by the two succeeding ones. I think Czerny is the greatest of living violinists.

We are to leave Paris for Belle-Riviere on the

20th. I hope to receive your answer to my last letter in time to write you once again from here.

GLADYS.

Paris, December 19th.

DEAR BROTHER: Just a line before we start for the Rhône. It is just too mean of you to poke fun at me because I made a P.S. of my statement that I had no postscript. Glad to hear that the foundations for the factory have been completed. Agnes and you must be terribly busy with your building projects. I presume we, too, will be very busy after consulting with the Duke. Etienne tells me his uncle proposes to practically rebuild the château.

GLADYS.

P.S.—I notice you write more about Agnes than about yourself, and never a word about Alicia. Take care—beware!

P.P.S.—How do you like that for a postscript?

CHAPTER XXVIII

MORE LETTERS FROM GLADYS

Belle-Riviere sur Rhône, January 1st.

DEAR HAROLD: Happy New Year to you and Agnes, and many, many thanks for the beautiful New Year's greetings each of you sent me and which I received yesterday together with your dear letters. I regret to hear you are having such a hard winter, and that it will prevent the completion of the factory before July 4th. You intend, you write, to start the machinery on that day. That's a good idea—for the Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company (have I got the name right?) to begin operations on the day of Independence. I sincerely hope that the object lesson you intend to teach will be taken to heart by every employer of labor. I presume, though you do not say so, that Agnes will play as prominent a part in the dedica-

tion of the works as she did at the laying of the corner-stone. My last letter crossed yours, but you have received it by this time and read my very pertinent P.S. It is a sister's right to warn her brother when he has a pretty stenographer in his employ, and I shall continue to exercise that right in my future letters whenever I think it necessary to do so. I know somebody who would give her little finger to stand in her shoes, but I mention no names.

Now for my news. We reached Arles about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st of last month. At the station we found awaiting us an old post-chaise such as Marie Antoinette might have used in the days before the French Revolution. Etienne affirms that it has been in the family a longer time than that. It was furbished up for the occasion and had four horses harnessed to it. A coachman in the Belle-Riviere livery sat on the high box, holding the reins; a postilion was perched on one of the horses; there were two outriders on horseback ahead of the vehicle, and two followers, similarly mounted, behind. The porters at the depot disposed of our baggage on top of the coach; Etienne assisted me up the high, awkward steps of the vehicle and then entered

it himself. The postilion blew his horn, the driver cracked his whip, and the cavalcade was off for Belle-Riviere, five miles to the north. It is a beautiful country of vine-clad hills and green valleys even in winter time—what must it be in the summer? I was enchanted with the scenery and did not mind that Etienne did not speak to me and seemed to grow glum the nearer he got to his birthplace. Out of his beloved Paris it is simply the case of the fish out of the water over again.

Belle-Riviere is really a grand estate, and after entering the domain you ride fully two miles through a forest of magnificent oaks before you reach the château itself, crowning a peak overlooking the beautiful river which gives the name to the family. What I could not help observing, however, even on this first view, was the air of neglect and decay which rested on the forest, on the parks surrounding the château, and on the château itself. I realized that it needed a mint of money to keep up the appearance of the place, without regard to any reconstruction, and I know now that, prior to my marriage, there was no income except from a few tenant-farms

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and from the hotel in the Faubourg, converted into an apartment house and occupied by four families.

As our cavalcade rounded the last curve of the path and the postilion gave a louder fanfare on his horn, we drove between two lines of peasants of the district, men, women and children, all attired in the quaint Provençal costume. Amid their shouts of welcome and a shower of flowers scattered by them, we drove up before the portals of the château. There, leaning on the arm of a servitor, almost as ancient as himself, stood the Duke de Belle-Riviere to receive us. You have seen Edwin Booth as Cardinal Richelieu; divest the character of his clerical robes and replace them with a court-dress of the time of Louis XVIII and you will have a perfect picture of the Duke as he came forward to kiss my hand when I had alighted on the marble terrace.

"Welcome to Belle-Riviere, its new chatelaine," he said with a courtliness of demeanor that no American can hope to attain. "Welcome, my niece *bien-aimée*, who will be to me like a daughter." Then he kissed me on the forehead.

I confess I felt a thrill of pride. It was worth

the payment of my dowry, if barter it was, to be thus saluted and received.

My letter has grown to such length that I must pause here with a "Continued in our next," as they put to serial stories.

GLADYS.

Belle-Riviere, January 8th.

DEAR HAROLD: I am fully installed chatelaine of Belle-Riviere. From the Duke down to the humblest menial all do homage to my lightest wish. My head would surely be turned if I could only divest myself of this one thought—am I being fairly worshiped, or is it my millions? How much of good, honest, American sincerity is there beneath all this show of obsequiousness which verges on servility?

The Christmas festivities, *fêtes de Noël*, as they call it, were really beautiful. They began the very day after our arrival and lasted until New Year. During the daytime there were masquerade processions through the valleys of the Rhône, in which the entire populace joined, dancing the farandole, and scattering flowers and confetti. It was like carnival

time in New Orleans. At night there were serenades under the windows of the château, and I heard the quaint Provençal airs of the troubadours played on shepherds' pipes and sung in the native *patois*. It was as if the hands on time's dial had been set back, and the days of chivalry were the realities of life, and the closing days of the nineteenth century a nightmare of brutal commercialism.

Etienne confesses to me that he is suffering from the most horrible ennui. Naturally, what strikes me as novel and picturesque is an old story to him, and I know that he is longing to get back to the gay boulevards of Paris. He finds his greatest distraction in hunting. He is out with his gun and dogs every day with members of the surrounding gentry, and he comes home every night so tired out that he goes to bed immediately after dinner, leaving me to entertain the Duke, who, by the way, has begun to broach the subject of the rebuilding of the château. I wonder if it is every young wife's experience that her husband falls asleep after his evening meal?

GLADYS.

P.S.—You write that I am absurd in my innuen-

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does, and that there is nothing between you and Agnes except the friendly relations between a man and his private secretary, who happens to be a charming young lady and a friend of the family. *Nous verrons*, as we say in France.

Belle-Riviere, February 3d.

DEAR BROTHER: Etienne has left it entirely to the Duke and myself to determine the character and expense of what the Duke terms "the revival of the glories of Belle-Riviere." It is to be done with my dowry, Etienne says, and hence it is no affair of his, except, he insinuated, apparently as an afterthought, that under the laws of France a husband has the right to set aside a portion of the *dot* brought him by his wife sufficient to meet his personal expenses. I know nothing about the laws of France and care less, but it is evident that I am expected to support my husband, which would sound very strange in American ears. I do not object. When I handed Etienne the check I intended that he should do with it what he pleased. Only he need not have quoted

the law to me, and, I must confess, he is not nearly so gallant or so attentive as he was in Paris.

Excuse this short letter; I do not feel in a humor to write.

GLADYS.

Belle-Riviere, March 5th.

DEAR HAROLD: So you have met Alicia again, and she sends her love to me. You never mentioned that she had gone to Florida for the winter and that you had not seen her since before Christmas. How does she look?—as beautiful as ever? It was at a ball given by Mrs. Van in honor of her return, you write, that you met her. Did you dance many dances with her? Let me make a guess and see if I'm right: you never told Agnes about the invitation, and she was not present at the ball. I'd give something to have seen Alicia's face if Agnes had been present. And I can imagine your face when you read these lines. You can't bite my head off, brother mine, with 3,000 miles of ocean between us; but, there, I won't tease you any more.

I'm letting the Duke follow out his own sweet

will in regard to the rebuilding operations, which include not only the entire reconstruction of the château, but also the tearing down of the hotel in the Faubourg and replacing it with a new building. The parks are to be laid out in the style of Italian gardens, with marble terraces and steps leading down to central basins, where artistic fountains will spurt forth cascades of water. The forest is to be trimmed and new paths laid out. It will be all very grand and very magnificent, but it will cost a great deal of money. When I delicately suggested that fact to the Duke, he, with an elaborate bow, replied :

“Oh, Madame la Marquise, with the dollars of America and the artistic taste of Europe what wonders can we not achieve !”

I am coming to the conclusion that the old gentleman is kept alive by the thought that he has the spending of my money in order to realize what is undoubtedly the dearest wish of his heart—the restoration of the family estate in all its former grandeur. He has hinted to me that he has just one other wish, and that is to live to see an heir born to inherit the title of the Duke de Belle-Riviere after his and the Marquis' death.

GLADYS.

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P.S.—I hear Czerny is to give another series of concerts in Paris, commencing in April. Heigh-ho! I'm beginning to get a little tired of all the decayed grandeur with which I am surrounded.

Paris, April 15th.

DEAR BROTHER MINE: Your last letter was forwarded to me here from Belle-Riviere. So my guess was right. Agnes was not at the ball. There would have been no use to have invited her, you state, as she would have declined to appear in such high society, and didn't have a dress fit to wear, to say nothing of jewels. Pooh, pooh! "Tell that to the marines!" to drop into good, wholesome American slang. You say you danced twice with Alicia during the evening. How kind! Two dances out of about twenty on the program!

You'll be no doubt surprised to learn that we are in Paris. Etienne was the first to suggest our leaving Belle-Riviere. He said he couldn't stand it in the country any longer; he must get back to Paris or die. I secretly shared his sentiments. When he

mentioned the matter to the Duke the latter pretended to be greatly distressed, but the old humbug, I believe, didn't care a particle whether we stayed or went. The building operations are on, and all day he's out watching the workmen or consulting with the architects. We really no longer exist for him. The preliminary estimate of the expense is six million francs, which will make quite a hole in my ten million francs dowry, without considering the drafts made on it by my husband, dear in more senses than one.

Since our arrival in Paris, Etienne and I have come to what is known in diplomacy as a *modus vivendi*. Gradually, without a word being mentioned by either of us on the subject, we have come to the mutual realization that there is very little love lost between us. Our marriage has been a fair barter. He made me a Marquise and I gave him two million dollars. Neither of us has any right to complain—only, God knows, I tried my best to learn to love him. We are good friends, good comrades, and have tacitly come to an agreement each to allow the other the utmost liberty of action consistent with honor. I find that many husbands and wives in our

social set in Paris live the same way and that it is regarded as the normal condition of modern marriages. He goes to his clubs and the races, which have begun, while I go to the art galleries and the matinées. Sometimes we dine out together at a table d'hôte restaurant, and then take in the opera or theater. If we are seen walking together on the boulevard all Paris figuratively claps its hands and exclaims: "That M. le Marquis de Belle-Riviere and Mme. la Marquise, what a model pair!"

So you are sure now that the factory will be ready by July 4th? I'm glad to hear it. How soon after you begin operations will you have your first press ready? Have you tried to get any advance orders yet? I've received a lovely letter from Agnes, in which she writes about you. She says—wouldn't you like to know? What would you give for a peep into the letter?

GLADYS.

P.S.—Czerny begins his concerts next Monday. I've reserved a box for all the afternoon recitals during the engagement.

P.P.S.—The other wish hinted at by the Duke is likely to be realized.

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Cablegram from Harold to the Marquis de Belle-Riviere:

New York, June 30th.

Have not heard from Gladys for over two months.
Is she sick? Answer.

From the Marquis de Belle-Riviere to Harold:

Paris, June 30th.

Gladys has been at death's door, but is fortunately recovering. She will write.

CHAPTER XXIX

LEAVES FROM GLADYS' JOURNAL

Paris, July 15th.

I HAVE written to Harold to show that I am still alive and to allay his and Agnes' fears, but only to you, my diary, my second self, dare I confide the tumultuous thoughts heaving in my bosom. Oh, that I had some dear sister to make my confidante! But I must unbosom my heart or I shall go mad—so I will pour the story, just as I have lived through it, into the secret pages of this book.

. . . Was it because I was so constant an attendant on Czerny's concerts that he noticed it and kept his dark, soulful eyes fixed on me as he evoked those divine strains from his instrument, or was it mere self-conceit on my part? I do not know; I do not care. I felt an irresistible longing to speak

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to him, if only to congratulate him on his genius. M. B——, a friend of Etienne's, dropped into my box to pay his respects to me. I told him what was in my mind, and, as he happened to be an intimate friend of Czerny's, he readily promised to take me on the stage after the performance and present the artist to me. He also told me some personal details about Czerny. He is a Hungarian only by descent and was born on the great East Side of New York, his parents having emigrated to America shortly after their marriage. His father was a musician, too, and early recognized that his son's talent far exceeded his own. He taught him all he could and then sent him to Vienna, where he became a pupil of the great Joachim. He gave his first concert when he was barely twenty years old, and his success was immediate and overwhelming. Then my informant surprised me with the statement that Czerny had been married and divorced. Shortly after his first appearance in public, and while he was still a mere boy, a great actress, ten years older than he, made violent love to him. The lad's head was turned and he married her. She led him a devil's dance. Cancelling all her own engagements, she

acted as his manager and squandered his money as fast as he could earn it. Her life was a reproach to him, and it was not long before he had become thoroughly disgusted with her. A more than usually outrageous piece of conduct on her part gave him the opportunity to force her to consent to a divorce and to break the chain which had become galling. It was this episode in his life which has given him the habitual melancholy look on his face and has made him somewhat of a woman-hater. . . .

I never suspected that I had a tinge of romance in my nature, but the story I had heard increased my desire to make Czerny's acquaintance. I found him shy and awkward when he was presented to me; he answered me in monosyllables, and it was only when I stopped praising him and praised, instead, the music he had been playing that he became animated in his conversation. I made him promise that he would pay me a visit some afternoon, and we would have tea together and talk of his favorite composers.

. . . Etienne was present when Czerny came

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and cordially welcomed him to our apartments; then he excused himself on account of some appointment at his club and left us alone together. We talked of music, then of our beloved New York. How sweet it sounded in my ears to hear once more our native English! We became as children, again romping in the streets or meandering through Central Park. He told me he had an ineffable longing to revisit New York; that this was his last tour in Europe, and that he had already arranged for a series of concerts to be given in the United States.

. . . That first visit led to others, and soon it became so that he dropped in to see me every afternoon when there was no recital. On concert afternoons I was always in my box. But I wish to put down here in this journal that no word was spoken by either of us that anybody could not have listened to; there was no act that could not have been witnessed by the whole world. . . .

Oh, the day—the day when the proof of my husband's perfidy was placed in my hands! Can I ever

forget it? Our agreement was perfect liberty of conduct on either side consistent with honor—and he had broken the terms of that agreement; he had been dishonorable to me—to the respect he owed the name of Belle-Riviere! When, with letters in his own handwriting in my hand, I taxed him with his infidelities, he only laughed. He had exchanged one mistress for another, he cold-bloodedly confessed, and the displaced one had avenged herself by sending me the incriminating letters. At my cry of outraged dignity, he begged me to remember that we were living in France—not in the United States. Other people, other morals! He had his mistresses and I had my violinist. . . .

. . . They tell me that I dropped as one dead to the floor and my life was despaired of until a week ago. I am still so weak that I can scarcely hold the pen with which I am writing this. I never saw my child—it never lived. They have buried the little body in the *Père la Chaise*, and as soon as I am able I will kneel at the grave and bedew it with tears. In it lie buried all my hopes of happiness in marriage.

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August 4th.

It is all settled between us. Etienne consents to a divorce on condition that I will not claim the unspent portion of my dowry. I laughed a bitter laugh when he made this proposition. The Duke has already spent or contracted liabilities for six million francs, and my husband has made ducks and drakes of the rest. But let it all go, together with the title of Marquise now and Duchess hereafter. I will be free, free again to return to my own America, to be once more clasped in my brother's arms. Poor Harold! his last letters are discouraging, too. The first presses are nearing completion, and he seems to be unable to obtain an advance order for them. He writes that it looks as if there was a conspiracy to convert his noble project into an utter failure! Will he, too, have sacrificed his millions for an idle dream of reforming the world, as I have sacrificed mine on the altar of vanity?

September 10th.

I received a letter from the Duke de Belle-Riviere, and also a cablegram from Harold urging me to return at once to New York, if I am able to stand

the voyage. The Duke's letter is very courteous and full of regrets that I have taken the decision to separate myself from the illustrious family of Belle-Riviere, but he does not write a word urging me to change my mind. I know that the physicians have told him that I can never become a mother again, and—oh, it is horrible to put it down even in this diary—he has no further use for me. I verily believe the old monomaniac, for that he really is, is already speculating that Etienne, as soon as he is rid of me, will marry some other heiress who will provide more funds to rebuild the château and present an heir to the dukedom. Oh, I want to go home! I want to get back to New York! I can stand the voyage—I will stand the voyage. If my lawyers would only hurry up that divorce. . . .

October 1st.

Thank God, I have it—the decree of divorce! I actually kissed the document with delight as I received it. They do these things more quickly and quietly in this country than in my own. There has not been more than an occasional paragraph published in the papers about it. I shudder to think

of the columns and the pictures that would have been printed in the New York papers if the divorce had been obtained there. Nothing now can keep me here. I shall engage passage on the first outgoing steamer; and then for home, for Harold and Agnes!

October 5th.

I am on board a steamer of the French Line; the same vessel, I note with a smile of bitter irony, on which I made my wedding-trip, not quite a year ago. My dream did not last long. . . .

Czerny is a fellow-passenger; he goes to begin his concert tour in the United States. He will give his first recital at Steinway Hall in New York. It was a mutual surprise for us to see each other. He knows my blighted marriage romance as I know his. He is very kind and gentle to me, and very sympathetic.

October 10th.

The outlook on the masthead has just cried "Land-ho!" We have sighted the Fire Island light. Soon—soon I shall be home—home, sweet home!

CHAPTER XXX

THE ONE THING PRECIOUS

THE Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company started operations on July 4th with all the éclat of dedicatory and patriotic speeches in the afternoon, and a display of fireworks in the evening. By eight-hour shifts of day and night work and extra help in the foundry to compensate for the still shorter hours of labor, they managed to finish by October 1st six presses, each capable of printing 48,000 complete papers an hour. They were magnificent specimens of handicraft and were indeed labors of love, as the men sang while they worked.

Harold had supervised everything, managed everything, working and overworking not only himself, but also Agnes. He himself did not mind laboring twice eight hours a day, and, as for Agnes, with her, too, it was a labor of love. As the presses

neared completion he personally solicited orders for their sale. There were about one hundred daily newspapers in the United States which could use presses of that size and capacity, and he either saw or was in communication with the proprietors of every single one. He knew they were overhauling their press-rooms and increasing their plants, and as some of them had published in their papers that they would buy a press or two from the new company, he thought the presses would go off like the traditional hot-cakes.

But never was a man so deceived in his life. He used all his powers of argument; he spoke about the basic principle of equal justice to all on which the company was founded; he referred to the fact that while the men worked less hours and received higher pay, he could offer the presses at a cheaper price than they had ever before been sold; he fairly pleaded and begged for an order; but all in vain. The very newspaper proprietors who had so highly lauded his efforts, and had promised him their patronage, shamelessly went back on their word. After all sorts of evasions about the presses not being just the right size or capacity for their re-

quirements, they came out with the truth; they did not give him an order because they were afraid.

The United States Printing Press Company, of which Silas Chubb was president, had absorbed all the larger works in the country. They held chattel mortgages on presses previously purchased on credit, which they could foreclose at a moment's notice. They had "a gentlemen's agreement" with certain type-founders, makers of stereotyping machinery, ink manufacturers and paper mills, by which these latter would not supply any newspaper with their products if it bought its presses from any other concern than the United States Company, and, in turn, the company would not sell any press to a newspaper that bought its type, its machinery, its ink or its paper-stock elsewhere. There was no writing to prove that such an arrangement had been entered into; it was simply a gentlemen's agreement made at a dinner over a bottle of wine and executed by winks and nods, instead of by signature and seal. But the newspapers knew all about it in their business connection, though never a word or a hint did they print concerning it in their news columns. They knew that it was a battle to destroy the co-operative principle

in manufacture and commerce, and that tens of millions were arrayed in the fight against Harold's puny two millions. If they bought Harold's presses it would be like lending aid and comfort to the enemy, and any newspaper that would do so would be destroyed along with the Armytage Co-operative Company, which, with their business perspicacity, they knew was foredoomed to failure. Noble, high-sounding principles were all very fine, but self-preservation was the first law of nature, even if the newspapers had not also been bribed with offers to duplicate any press which Harold offered for sale at one half the price he asked for it.

He gradually realized the extent of the trade conspiracy against him which had been hatched by the fertile, artful brain of Silas Chubb, hence his discouraging letters to his sister alluded to by her in her journal. On the very day he received the telegram stating that the vessel on which she was returning had been sighted, the last bitter drop was poured into his cup of disappointment. He learned that the loyalty and fidelity of his own men had been undermined. Emissaries had secretly gone among them and showed them how impossible it was for

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Harold to sell the presses already finished, much more to get orders for future work; that his capital was sunk in a business which was a dead loss from the outset and which in a very short time would be bankrupt; that no one would extend any credit to a company which had no market for its output. The men owed it to themselves and to their families to leave the sinking ship before it would drag them down with it to destruction. And then would come an offer of employment with the United States Company, with assured union wages and hours and a promise of steady work for years. To the credit of the workingmen it must be said that some of these emissaries were promptly kicked out of the house and received only broken heads for their pains; but it was not so in all cases. Human nature is the same whether one is a millionaire proprietor of a newspaper or a shoveler of sand in the casting-room of a foundry. Enough men promised to forsake the co-operative company to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to continue the works.

It was a very sad Harold, and a very sober-looking Agnes, that came down that afternoon to welcome home Gladys as the steamer was warped alongside

its pier. She stood on the deck, clad all in mourning for the babe that had never lived, and beside her stood the violin virtuoso. She gave a scream of joy as she recognized the two on the pier, and eagerly pointed them out to Czerny. She was among the first to run down the gangway, and brother and sister bedewed each other with tears as they were clasped in each other's embrace. Then Agnes came in for her share of the kissing and hugging, and Czerny was introduced. He begged to be excused from entering their carriage, after the custom-house formalities had been gone through, but promised Gladys to visit her as he had done in Paris. Then the three, reunited after a year's parting, drove to the Armytage residence, where Gladys received a second cordial welcome from all the servants. It had now grown evening, and after some changes in her toilet Gladys sat down to dinner with her brother and Agnes, with a lighter heart and happier feeling than since the beginning of her illness. Both Harold and Agnes observed her altered looks and her physical weakness, but wisely forebore from commenting on them. She, too, noticed that they seemed worried-

looking, and when the meal was over and they had repaired to the parlor, she spoke about it.

"Ah, Harold, you, too, have your troubles. Your recent letters fairly frightened me. Is there no prospect of success in your business?"

"I fear none," he gloomily replied.

"A fine pair we are," she said with a sad smile; "I have wasted two million dollars in a foolish dream of pride, and you an equal amount for at least a noble cause."

"Harold and I have talked the matter over very seriously," said Agnes, "and we have come to the conclusion that it is his duty for the men's own sake to dissolve the company and close the works. That will set them at liberty to find work elsewhere. The plant and the presses will have to be sold at a tremendous sacrifice——"

"I care not for the money loss," interrupted Harold. "There will be enough left to support us in a more modest way than we have been living. We do not need an establishment on Fifth Avenue, nor fine horses and carriages, nor a retinue of servants. We *do* need happiness, and that will be ours."

He gave Agnes a look which made that young

lady crimson with blushes even in the semi-darkness of the big room, in which there was no light except the warm glow of the coals in the open grate.

"The disappointment I feel," he continued, "is for the failure of my plans. I have tried to solve this terrible problem of the persistence of poverty and wretchedness, of misery and vice in the midst of plenty, and I have failed. Surely—surely there is a solution! God did not intend that some men should possess inordinate wealth with all the power it implies, while other men should bedew with tears the hard crusts they earn by the sweat of their brows. Some day the light will shine in on us, and then the path will be made clear."

In accordance with his resolve, Harold went the next day to the works to summon the men and inform them that he could no longer command their services. On his arrival he was told that a lady was waiting in his office to see him. It could not be Agnes, he knew, for she was to come to the office later. He wondered who it could be. Taking off his hat and overcoat, he left them in the ante-room and entered his private office, closing the door

behind him. At his entrance the visitor rose and faced him.

"Alicia!" he exclaimed in the greatest surprise. "You here?"

She seemed greatly agitated and spoke in a hurried, jerky manner.

"Yes, it is I. It seems horribly unconventional for me to come to you alone, in your office, at this hour of the morning—but what do I care for etiquette or form when it is a matter of life or death to you?"

"You startle me, Alicia. You are greatly excited. Won't you be seated?"

"No, no," she declared. "I prefer to stand. I can talk better so. Oh, Harold, your interests have been dear to my heart, and when I saw how my own father was plotting your ruin I could not refrain from coming to warn you."

"You are very kind," he said, "and I thank you for the anxiety you display in my behalf. But the news you bring me is not unknown to me. I have seen your father's handiwork in the obstacles placed in my path."

"But you do not know the worst," she cried. "Last

night his lawyer was at our house, and knowing that the matter of his visit concerned you, I played the eavesdropper for your sake. Father has bought up whatever outstanding debts you were obliged to make. In some way his lawyer has secured a writ of attachment, and the sheriff is to be here to-day and take possession of the works!"

"Let him come," cried Harold defiantly. "My affairs have reached such a crisis that a visit from the sheriff has no terrors for me."

"Oh, Harold! It means the utter ruin of your hopes, the blasting of your noble aspirations to aid your fellow-men. It means poverty, if not disgrace, for you and for Gladys, for I have read of her arrival yesterday and know her sad story. It means so much, so much to you—and yet I can save you; I can make it possible for you to realize all that you set out to perform—the emancipation of the working classes, the——"

"You can do this?" he interrupted, grasping her by the wrist. "You, Alicia? Oh, do not raise any false hopes in a man who is on the verge of despair! If you can show me the way to crown my work with success, then you are indeed an angel of mercy to me!"

"I can and I will," she exclaimed. "For years back, while my father was manager of your father's works, I have known of secret speculations he made with money that belonged to the firm, not to him. I forced him to make me his partner, and as he heaped up millions so did I. Oh, Harold, every penny I have is yours. See, on my knees I offer all to you!"

She sank on her knees and raised her hands imploringly to him.

"You will make this sacrifice for me?" he cried in the utmost surprise.

"I will do more," she panted. "I will threaten my father that I will betray him. I will warn him that I will put into your hands the proofs that will send him to jail as a common thief, if he does not cease his persecutions of you, if he does not remove every obstacle from your path, if he does not facilitate every effort of yours to make your company successful. Oh, Harold," she continued, almost breathlessly, "I will do this for your sake because I love you—because I have always loved you since I was a child—because you are to me more than my father, more than my mother—more than my God!"

As he heard these words and saw the wild, passionate woman groveling in the dust before him, the light of hope died out of Harold's eyes and a stern expression spread over his face.

"Rise, Alicia," he said, taking her by the arms and fairly forcing her to her feet. "It is not meet for any one to kneel except to his Maker. No woman can purchase with a bribe the love of a right-minded man; no honorable woman would want to do so. I could not take the millions you offer me without accepting your love. I would not accept that for the millions you have, because I have no love to give you in return. No, let the sheriff come, let the works be shut down, let your father keep his ill-gotten wealth, let all my aspirations perish; from out the wreck and ruin I will save the one thing most precious to me--the true love of a true woman!"

There was a gentle tap at the door. Harold ran and opened it. There stood Agnes. Taking her right hand, he led her forward.

"Alicia--Miss Chubb," he said, "permit me to present to you the girl who two nights ago made me supremely happy by the avowal of her love for me--my future wife, Agnes Merrihew!"

L'ENVOI

The Armytage Co-operative Printing Press Company is no more. It has been swallowed up in the rapacious maw of the United States Printing Press Company, of which Silas Chubb, in his eighties now, is still president. He is said to be worth at least two hundred million dollars, and is still making money.

It was a very modest wedding which celebrated the nuptials of Harold and Agnes, so different, everybody said, from the grand function when Gladys married the Marquis; but, then, it has turned out entirely different, too. They are indeed supremely happy in their modest apartment in an unfashionable flat. The Fifth Avenue house went in the general wreck, but Harold saved a few thousands, with the income of which, and by his own earnings as a writer and lecturer on economic subjects, they support themselves fairly well, and are raising a fine lot of children. Agnes still writes poems, but they are cheerful ones, because the song-birds of joy are caroling in her heart.

Six months after her brother's marriage, Gladys gave her hand and, this time, her heart to the Hun-

garian violinist. Mme. Czerny, as she is called, accompanies her husband on all his tours, and their devotion to each other is one of the marvels of the theatrical and musical professions.

Mrs. Van has cut her and Harold's acquaintance. She has no use, she said, for poor relations. She and Alicia became great chums, for the latter seemed bent on only one object—to get rid of her fortune as fast as she could dissipate it. That was the kind of task in which Mrs. Van liked to assist—and she was with her when sudden death came after a night of debauch in Monte Carlo.

The Marquis de Belle-Riviere married a second time, again an American, this time the daughter of a millionaire Chicago pork-packer. The Duke managed to spend some of her millions in rebuilding the never completed château on the Rhône and to kiss an heir to his name and title before he died, verging on ninety years. Thus the Marquis became a Duke, and his Duchess is a popular favorite in Paris, where her unconventionality and awkwardness are good-naturedly laughed at.

Jack McQuillan, after all, cheated the electric chair. Through Harold's efforts the death sentence

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was commuted by the governor to imprisonment for life. But he failed in health from the moment he entered Sing Sing; and the once powerful form became reduced to skeleton proportions and to the feebleness of a child. When the governor's decree was put in his hands, he pressed it to his lips, murmured the name "Maggie," and died with a smile on his emaciated face.

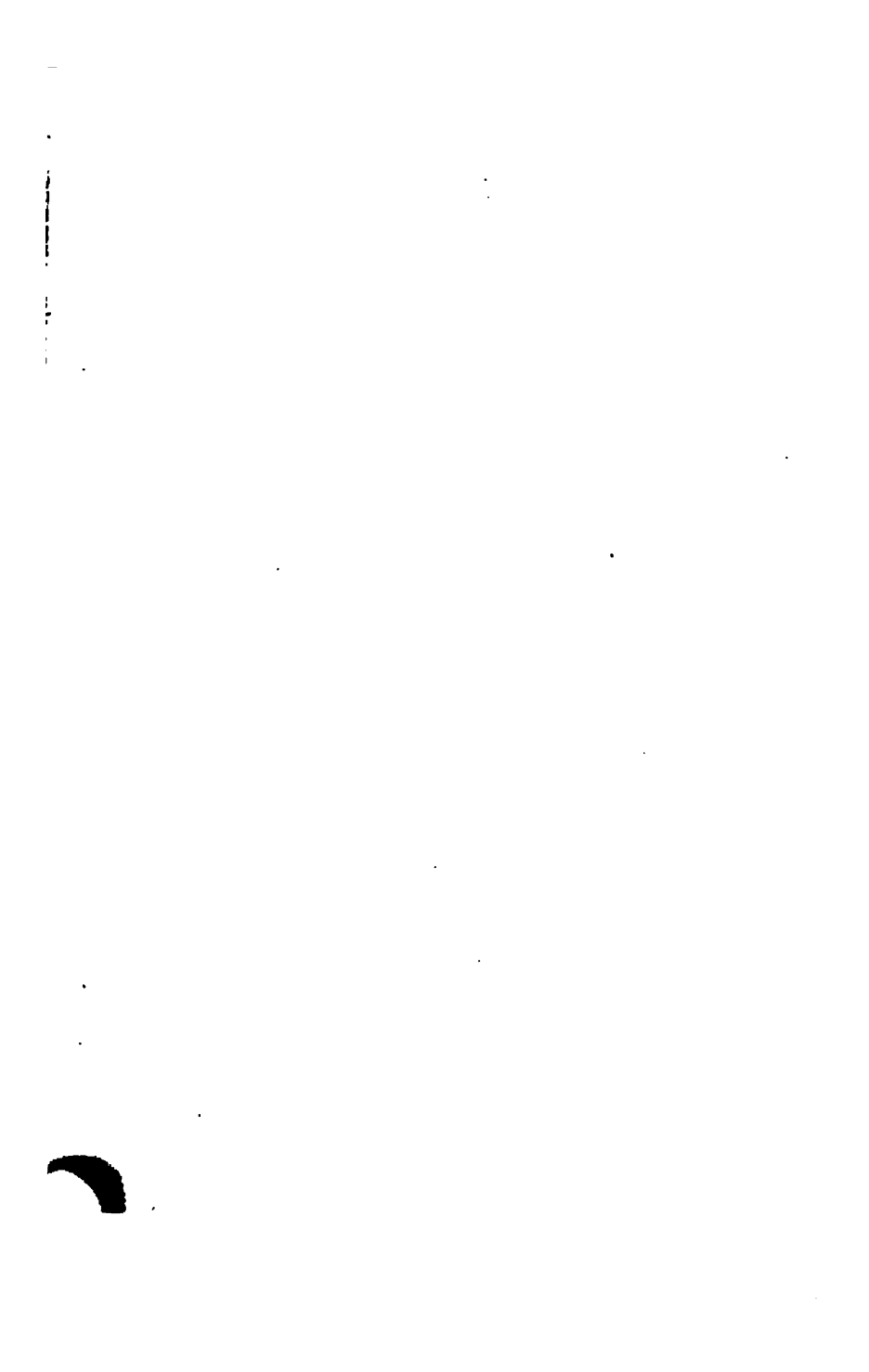
On the occasion of Gladys' wedding to Czerny, the bride playfully reminded Agnes of that time when the latter first met Harold, and Gladys had quoted some poetry.

"I remember," declared Harold, folding his wife in his arms; "it was the opening stanza of 'The Heart of the People.' Come, Agnes, give us the closing one, now."

With a blush Agnes recited:

" 'The heart of the people, oh, fill it with love,
The love that's the essence of God up above;
Then with joy it will throb, your heart and mine,
With joy that's eternal, celestial, divine.' "

THE END



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The heart of the people

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